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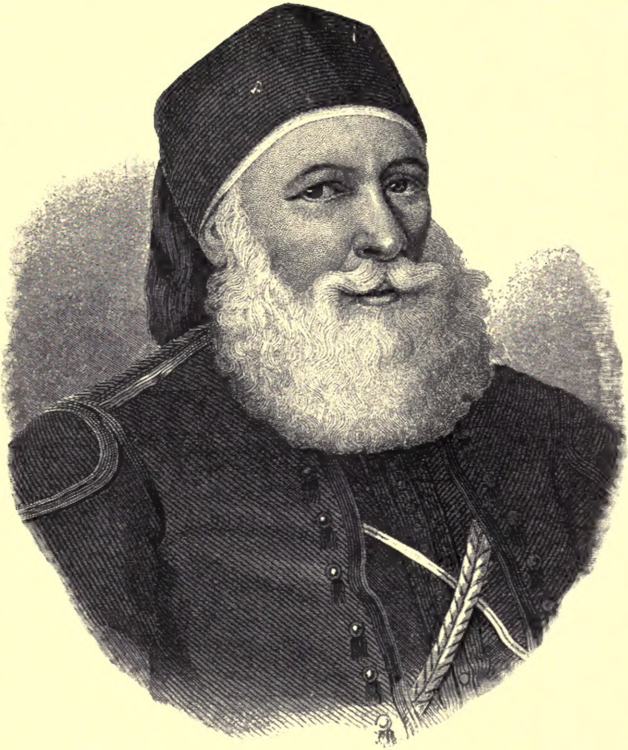

MOHAMMED ALI.

MOHAMMED ALI AND HIS HOUSE

An Historical Romance

BY

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Klara Mundt

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

CHAPMAN COLEMAN

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1899

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MOHAMMED ALI AND HIS HOUSE.

BOOK I.

YEARS OF YOUTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE SEA.

Beautiful is the sea when it lies at rest in its sublimity, its murmuring waves gently rippling upon the beach, the sky above reflected with a soft light upon its dark bosom.

Beautiful is the sea when it bears upon its surface the stately ships, as though they were rose-leaves caressingly tossed by one wave to another. Beautiful is the sea when the light barks with their red sails are borne slowly onward by the gentle breeze, the careless fishermen casting nets from the decks of their frail craft into the deep, to draw thence, for the nourishment or pleasure of man, its silent inhabitants. Beautiful it is when in the darkness of the night, relieved only by the light of the stars, and the moon just rising above the horizon, the pirates venture forth in their boats from their lairs on the coast, and glide stealthily along within the shadow of the overhanging cliffs, awaiting an opportunity to rob the fishermen of their harvest; or, united in larger numbers, to suddenly surround the stately merchantman, clamber like cats up its sides, murder the sleeping, unsuspecting crew, and put themselves in possession of the vessel.

The sea has witnessed all this for centuries, has silently buried such secrets in its depths; and yet, after such nights of blood and terror, the sun has again risen in splendor over its bosom, ever presenting the same sublime spectacle.

Beautiful is the sea when it lies at rest in the azure light of the skies—a very heaven on earth. But still more beautiful, more glorious, is it when it surges in its mighty wrath—a wrath compared with which the thunder of the heavens is but as the whispering of love, the raging of a storm upon the land a mere murmur. An immeasurable monster, the sea rushes with its mighty waves upon the rock-bound coast, sends clouds of spray high into the air, telling in tones of thunder of the majesty and strength of the ocean that refuses to be fettered or conciliated.

You may cultivate the arts and sciences on the land, you may bring the earth into subjection, and make it yield up its treasures; the sea has bounded in freedom since the beginning, and it will not be conquered, will not be tamed. The mind of man has learned to command all things on the land, knows the secrets of the depths of the earth, and uses them; but man is weak and powerless when he dares to command, or ventures to combat, the ocean. At its pleasure it carries ships, barks, and boats; but at its pleasure it also destroys and grinds them to dust, and you can only fold your hands and let it act its will.

To-day it is surging fiercely; its waves are black, and their white heads curl over upon the rock Bucephalus, that stretches far out into the bay of Contessa, pictured against the blue sky in the form of a gigantic black steed. Huddled together at the foot of this rock, and leaning against its surface, is a group of men and boys. They are eagerly gazing out upon the water, and are perhaps speaking to each other; but no one hears what another says, for the waves are roaring, and the storm howling in the rocky caves, and the waves and storm, with their mighty chorus, drown the little human voices. The pale faces of the boys are expressive of terror and anxiety, the knit brows of the men indicate that they are expecting a disaster, and the trembling lips of the old men forebode that the next hour may bring with it some horrible event.

They stand upon the beach, waiting anxiously; but the monster—the sea—regards them not, and hurls one black wave after the other in upon the cliff behind which they stand, often drenching them with spray.

But these people pay no attention to this, hardly notice it; their whole soul is in their eyes, which are gazing fixedly out upon the waters. Thus they stand, these poor, weak human beings, in the presence of the grand, majestic ocean, conscious of their impotence, and waiting till the monster shall graciously allow his anger to abate. For a moment the storm holds its breath; a strange, solemn stillness follows upon the roaring of the elements, and affords these people an opportunity to converse, and impart their terror and anxiety to each other.

"He will not return," said one of them, with a shake of the head and a sad look.

"He is lost!" sighed another.

"And you boys are to blame for it!" cries a third, turning to the group who stood near the men, closely wrapped in their brown cloaks, the hoods pulled down over their eyes.

"Why did you encourage him to undertake so daring a feat?" cried a fourth, pointing threateningly toward the boys.

"It is not our fault, Sheik Emir," said one of them, defiantly; "he would do so."

"Mohammed always was proud and haughty," exclaimed another. "We told him that a storm was coming, and that we would go home. But he wouldn't, sheik."

"That is to say," said the sheik, angrily—"that is to say, you have been ridiculing the poor boy again?"

"He is always so proud, and thinks himself something better than the rest of us," murmured the boy, "though he is something worse, and may some day be a beggar if—"

The storm now began to rage more furiously; the waves towered higher, and threw their spray far on to the shore and high upon the rock, as though determined to make known its dread majesty to the inhabitants of the city of Cavalla, which stands with its little houses, narrow streets, and splendid mosque, on the plateau of the rock of Bucephalus. On the summit of the rock a woman is kneeling, her hands extended imploringly toward heaven; she has allowed the white veil to fall from her face, and her agonized features are exposed to view, regardless of the law that permits her to reveal her countenance in the harem only. What are the laws to her? where is the man to command her to veil her countenance? who says to her: "You belong to me, and my heart glows with jealousy when others behold you"?

No one is there who could thus address her; for she is a widow, and calls nothing on earth her own, and loves nothing on earth but her son, her Mohammed Ali.

She knows that he has gone out to sea in a frail skiff to cross over to the island-rock Imbro. The boys have told her of the daring feat which her son had undertaken with them. Filled with anxiety, they had come up to the widow of Ibrahim to announce that her son had refused to return with them after they had started in their fisher-boats for the island of Imbro. "I have begun it and I'll carry it out," the proud boy had replied to them. "You have ridiculed me, and think yourselves better oarsmen than I, and now you shall see that I alone shall cross over to Imbro, while you cowardly return when the storm begins to rage."

This was his reply, and in their anxiety they had repeated it to his mother Khadra, telling her, at the same time, that they were innocent of her son's misdeed, and had begged him in his mother's name to return with them. There she kneels on the brow of the rock, gazing out upon the water, imploring Allah to restore her son, and conjuring the raging sea to bear back her child to the shore.

The mother's entreaties are ardent, and strong is her prayer to Allah and to Nature.

The *ghins*, the evil spirits themselves, hold their breath and flap their black wings more gently when they rustle past the spot where a mother weeps and prays for her son!

But a tear drops from the eyes of the good spirits when they meet such a mother, and this tear is potent to save her child. Perhaps at this moment an *agathodœmon* has flown by, has seen the agonized mother, and has let fall a tear upon the waters, for at this moment they become more tranquil. Perhaps the ghins have suddenly been swept away by the whirlwind, Zeboah, for the storm is now hushed.

The storm is stilled, though from time to time its mighty breath is again heard; and then it is again mute, and the waves roll in upon the shore less furiously. The sky, too, begins to grow clear. The sun looks out from between the clouds, and throws a long golden streak of light across the waves, as if to conciliate with its smile the foaming sea, and smooth its furrowed brow.

Now, a single, mighty cry resounds from above, from the place where the mother is kneeling. It seems to find its echo here below on the shore where the men and boys are standing. It is a cry of joy, of ecstasy. And all hands are raised and pointed across the water to the spot where the island-rock, Imbro, must lie. It is not visible ; the waves have surged over it, as they always do when the storm rages, but they know that it must lie there. And there—a black spot ! It dances on the waves, and is lifted above the white spray. The sun throws its rays far out over the waters, and over the black spot. Again a shout and a cry resound on the shore and above on the plateau.

Yes, it is the boat, dancing like a leaf up through the foam. The mother and the men are waiting on the shore in breathless suspense, as it approaches nearer and nearer. Yes, it is the boat in which Mohammed Ali went out to sea.

Yes, it is he ; he is returning !

The men and boys are now rejoicing, and the poor woman has fainted away. While the mother's heart was in doubt, it throbbed violently in her breast ; now that she knows her child is returning, it stands still with joy and delight.

The women, who had vainly endeavored to console her, have now come to recall the mother to consciousness, and to cheer her with joyous words.

"Your son returns ! Allah has protected him ! The ghins had no power over him, his agathodæmon watched over him ! Allah be praised, Allah is great !"

The boat comes on dancing over the water. The boy stands alone, no one to assist him in wielding his oar. He holds it firmly grasped in his hands, using it lustily, and steering in defiance of the waves toward the shore. And now the men hasten forward to his assistance. They throw long ropes to him, and hail their success with a shout of joy, when one of them happily falls into the boy's boat. The latter grasps the end thrown to him, and holds it firmly. The men draw the rope and thus force the boat to the shore, and, as it touches the rock, ten arms grasp it and hold it securely. With a single bound the boy leaps ashore.

His face is perfectly calm ; his eyes, lustrous as stars, show no traces of terror ; they are fixed on the men with a kindly glance, but they darken as he turns to the boys.

"You see, my boys," said he, with a calm and at the same time threatening expression, "I have won my wager ! Here is the proof that I was over there. The knife that Ibrahim lost there yesterday, I bring back to him. Here it is !"

He takes the knife out of his jacket, thoroughly drenched with water, and throws it down before the boys. "I have won my wager ! You men are witnesses of my triumph ! Each boy is bound to pay me tribute from to-day. Each one must furnish me, twice a week, with the best peaches and dates from his garden, and when we go out to the chase they must obey me, and acknowledge me to be their captain."

What triumph shone in his eyes, what an expression of energy in the bearing of a boy scarcely ten years old !

"That was it !" exclaimed Toussoun Aga, in a reproachful tone. "For this reason my brother's son risked his life, and caused his mother and all of us so much anxiety.—Allah forgive you ! You are a wild, defiant boy."

"No, uncle," cried the boy ; "no, I am not wild and defiant. They ridiculed me, and said I was not as good as they, could do nothing, didn't even know how to steer a boat. And then we laid a wager, and I won my wager ; and they shall pay the tribute, and acknowledge me to be their captain. I call all you men to witness that I am the captain of the boys of Cavalla."

The men looked at each other, amused and astonished at the same time. He speaks like a child, and yet haughtily, like a monarch. His words are childish, and yet so full of energy. And many of them thought they could read in the book of the future that a great destiny awaited the poor boy Mohammed Ali. "He is poor, to be sure, and will have much hard fighting to do with the storms of life. May the same success he has met with against the storms of the sea to-day also attend him hereafter against the storms of life !"

Toussoun Aga stretches out his hand to take that of his nephew Mohammed, to lead him to the rock above, to his mother, but the boy quickly rejects the proffered assistance.

"I can ascend the rock to my mother alone; I am not weak and terrified, uncle. Go on, I will follow."

And, as he says this, he crosses his hands behind his back. The rest now cry out:

"Look at his hands! Look, they are bleeding!"

Toussoun now takes the boy's hands in his own, against his will, and opens them. They are covered with blood, that oozes out of the raw flesh.

"It is nothing," said the boy; "nothing at all. I had to hold fast to the oar, the skin stuck to it, and that made my hands bleed."

The men gaze on him admiringly, and whisper to each other: "He is a hero, if he is only ten years old." And they respectfully step back, and allow the boy to pass on up the rocky path that leads to Cavalla.

CHAPTER II.

MOTHER AND SON.

"Here he is again, Sitta Khadra. I bring your son," said Toussoun Aga, as he entered, with the boy, the hut into which some kind-hearted women had brought Mohammed's mother. "Scold the naughty youth well, and tell him what anxiety he has caused us all."

Sitta Khadra, however, did not scold him, but only extended her open arms, drew her son to her bosom with a joyous cry, and kissed him tenderly. Toussoun gazed smilingly at the two, and then noiselessly left the hut.

"It is best to leave them alone, that Allah only may hear what the mother says to her son," he murmured, as he returned to his own hut, where he industriously began to apply himself to making fishing-nets, with which occupation he earned his livelihood.

Now that Mohammed was left alone with his mother, the boy who was always so reserved and timid in the presence of others, knelt down before her, and entreated her tenderly not to be angry with him for having made her anxious.

"But you see, mother, it had to be done," said he, excitedly and imploringly at the same time, "else they would have ridiculed me again as they so often do."

"How can they ridicule you, my beloved son?" murmured Khadra, regarding him tenderly; "are you not handsomer and stronger than all of these pale, weak boys? Can you not steer a boat and use a gun better than they? Are you not a man among these boys?"

"Not yet, Mother Khadra; but I shall become one," said he, rising from his knees and lifting his head proudly. "Yes, I will become a man among these boys, and they shall all be my subjects. We had laid a wager, and that wager had to be won; and won for you, Mother Khadra," he added with a glad smile.

"For me?" she asked, wonderingly. "How can your victory over these boys be of use to me, except that I rejoice in your greater strength?"

"There is something else, mother," he replied, joyously. "They must pay a tribute, and the finest dates and peaches, and the most beautiful flowers in their gardens, are mine, two days in the week, and for three months—this was the wager. Now you have fruits and flowers. Do you remember how you complained, while we were sitting on the rock looking at the sea, that we had only this poor little hut, and no garden and no field? I said to myself, 'I'll get them for her.' And, mother, you shall have all the rest besides. Now you have fruits and flowers, but, if Allah is gracious, you shall soon have your own garden and your own house, handsomer than all the houses of Cavalla. I will build my mother a palace; she shall have slaves and servants; all shall bow down before her as before their mistress; none shall rule over her but Allah and the prophet."

The mother gazed in wonder at her son's excited countenance; he seemed to her at this moment not a child, but a man, a hero.

"Yes," she murmured to herself, "he will make what he says come true: all that the dream announced and the prophetess foretold."

"What is that you are saying, mother?" asked he. "What was that dream, what did the prophetess foretell?"

She gently shook her head. "It will not be well to tell you, my son. Your heart is bold and passionate. And yet," she continued, after a moment, "it may be well that you should know it; for to the daring belongs the world, and Allah blesses those who have a passionate and earnest heart. Sit down at my side, my son, and you shall know all."

"Speak, mother, speak—I am listening. How was the dream?"

"It was more than twelve years ago," said the mother, thoughtfully. "At that time I was a young married woman, and was beautiful—so the people said—for I was so poor that I could not even buy myself a veil, and Allah and the prophets forgave me for going uncovered before men. Then it was that your father, the Boulouk Baschi of the police, saw me; his eye rested lovingly on the poor girl, and he did me the honor to make me his wife, and he covered my face with a veil, that no other man might henceforth see me. It was a great honor for me that Boulouk Baschi considered me worthy to be his wife, even his only wife. For he made no use of the privilege accorded by the prophet and our religion, which allows a man to conduct several women to his harem. He said the one woman of his heart should be the one woman of his house. It was a happy year, my son, this first year of our married life. We were not rich, we had nothing but the salary which your father received from the *tschorbadji*, but it was sufficient; when we are happy we do not need much. You must know, my son, that my heart is not fixed on splendor and show; it was not my own thoughts that conjured up these proud dreams. We lived, as I have said, in quiet bliss, hoping that our happiness might soon be increased by the birth of a child, by you, my son. One circumstance only dimmed our happiness: this was your father's service. A bad service, my son! Bands of robbers infested our peninsula, and it was a dangerous calling to lie in wait for them, and follow them up into the mountains. I always trembled when your father went out with his men in pursuit of robbers, and I had good cause to tremble. Allah had implanted in my soul a foreboding of coming evil. One day, while engaged in preparing our simple repast, I heard heavy footsteps, and a subdued murmur of voices approaching. I knew that some misfortune was impending, and there was. Your father was brought in a bleeding corpse! He had followed the robbers far up into the mountains alone, his men refusing to accompany him. The robbers had surrounded and slain him, disfiguring his dear face so that I could scarcely recognize it."

"What was done with the murderers?" asked Mohammed, fiercely. "Were they punished, executed?"

She shook her head. "There was no one there to witness the deed, and, when your father's successor was appointed, they had probably long since crossed the sea. Their names were not even known, and your father's blood is unavenged to this day."

"Mother!" exclaimed the boy, fiercely, "I will avenge my father! I swear it!"

"Poor boy! You avenge him? You do not even know who his murderers were," said she, gently.

"I will have vengeance on the whole world!" exclaimed the boy. "All my enemies shall suffer for his death! What did you do, mother, when you beheld my father's body? You laid your hand on his eyes, and swore to avenge him, did you not?"

"No, my son. I sank down by your father's body, kissed his hand, and took leave of him whom alone I had loved. But yet, I did register one oath! I swore that henceforth I would love nothing but the child I bore under my heart—his child. I also swore that the veil with which he had covered my face should never be lifted by another man. Many a one longed to take Ibrahim Aga's widow to wife, for, talkative as love and happiness always are, he had told them of his love and his happiness, and they thought that they, too, might obtain this through me. But I rejected them, though I was poor and possessed nothing but this hut to shelter myself and my child, as yet unborn. For the sake of this child, I rallied my energies and dried my eyes. A mother who has not yet given birth should not weep; her tears would fall on the child and make its heart sick and its eyes dim, and I wished my child to see the world with his father's eyes, to begin life with his father's heart. Therefore I implored Allah to give strength and joyousness to the life that was to be devoted to my child. One night I had a strange, wondrous, and beautiful dream. On a sparkling throne I saw a man in glittering armor, his sword high uplifted, his eyes flaming, his countenance lustrous with beauty. I knew this man, although I had never seen him. His countenance was that of my Ibrahim, and yet it was another—it was his son! In my dream I was distinctly conscious that it was my son I beheld before me. He looked not at me, but out upon the world with an angry eye. At his feet thousands lay extended upon the ground in deep reverence. Far behind him I saw a strange landscape, such as I had never before beheld. On a wide, yellow waste of sand, stood towering proud and mighty structures of wondrous form, their summits glittering in the sunshine. And, strange to say, afar off, on a magnificent palace, I saw the same man I had before beheld, his sword again uplifted, and above his head shone the crescent with the three stars. All at once the man became transformed into a child that shone like an angel, and this angel stretched out its arms and flew toward me. In my dream I extended my arms toward this vision, and cried, 'My son—my son!' This cry awakened me. On the following day you were born. When I saw and greeted you with Allah's blessing, I was startled to find the child I held in my arms the same as the angel that had flown to me in my dream! Oftentimes since I have thought of this dream, and endeavored to interpret it, for the agathodæmon that watches over men, and protects them from the ghins and their evil pinions, sometimes sends dreams to the unhappy to announce to them the future. I thought my agathodæmon had sent me this dream.

"One day some gypsies came to Cavalla on a ship that landed here to procure provisions. They remained here several days, and made a business of fortune-telling. I went to an old woman, said to be the greatest prophetess, held out my hand, and demanded that she should announce the future of myself and my son. The old woman gazed at me with a strange look, and said: 'You wish your dream interpreted?'

"This startled me, for I had rarely spoken of my dream, and the old woman could not have heard of it. She had been in Cavalla but two days, and who should have told her of the poor, obscure woman, Sitta Khadra? But this question startled me to the very soul, and it seemed to me that this woman must tell me the truth. I motioned to her to tell me my dream. She related the entire dream with every circumstance, and interpreted it."

"How did she interpret it?" asked Mohammed, in breathless suspense.

"She said to me: 'Your son will one day become a prince and a hero; he will see a whole nation bowed down at his feet; he will wield the sword over this people, and bring them under his yoke. Your son shall be a ruler; palaces shall be his, and among the mighty he shall be the mightiest. Destiny announced this to you through the man transformed into the angel that flew to you, and who is your son. All hail, Khadra, for you shall be the mother of the mightiest, of the master of the earth!'"

"Is this true? Am I to be a prince, a mighty ruler?" asked Mohammed, in ecstasy. "I am to behold nations at my feet? Repeat it again, what did she say?"

"Yes, she said this: 'A prince shall he become, nations shall he behold at his feet, and the whole world shall talk of and praise him.'"

"I swear to you, mother, that she shall have told the truth! I swear to you, by the spirit of my father, by Allah and by the prophets, I will make the old woman's prophecy the truth! I shall be a prince, a great ruler, and whole nations shall bow down in the dust before me. I thank you, mother, for having foretold my future, and I only implore that Allah may graciously permit my mother to live to see the fulfilment of the prophecy. Now I know what I have to do, and, when the boys ask me again what is to become of poor Mohammed, I shall tell them: 'I will make of him a prince, a hero, a king.' Yes, I will speak thus to them, and thus it shall be! And with them I shall begin! These cowardly boys shall be my subjects, and woe to them if they do not pay the tribute! O mother, beautiful days are in store for you!"

"My dear, foolish boy," said the mother, regarding him tenderly, "you dream of a brilliant future, but it is impossible to realize this dream. We are poor, and Fortune seldom resides with the poor."

"I will make us rich!" exclaimed the boy; "yes, I will make us rich, though as yet I know not how I am to do it. But do you know who shall assist me in doing so?"

"I think I do," replied the mother, smiling, "you will ask your good friend Mr. Lion?"

Mohammed nodded assent. "Rightly guessed, mother! To him I shall go and ask him how to begin to become a rich man. Let me do so at once, my heart is burning to ask this question."

He seized his red cap, pulled it over his brown hair, took leave of his mother, hurried into the street, and out of the poverty-stricken little suburb, toward the main thoroughfare, where the wealthy lived. He walked on, reflecting profoundly over what his mother had related, and without noticing the boys who were coming toward him. When they perceived him, they stepped aside as if ashamed to meet the boy who had excelled and conquered them, slipped into the next house, closed the door which extended only half-way up the doorway behind them, and looked out over it.

"Only look at him!" they cried, derisively. "He is good for nothing. He can do nothing. What is he to become but a beggar? Who will pity him when his uncle is dead, and his mother sick and bedridden? Then he will have to serve us, and pay us tribute."

They continued to laugh at him, but he walked on quietly. Their malicious words had not escaped him, but he took no notice of them. Proudly and composedly he walked on, murmuring to himself in a low voice: "They shall pay for this some day! They too are my enemies, on whom I intend to be avenged, fearfully avenged!"

These thoughts were still expressed in his features as he entered the great store of the merchant Lion. Hastily he threaded his way down the narrow path that lay between the bales and barrels, toward the light that shone at the end. There stood the merchant's office. Now he hears a kindly voice welcoming him.

"Behold the hero of Imbro, the daring conqueror of the sea! Welcome my hero, welcome!"

He stood still, listening to these tones, a happy smile overspreading his countenance. How beautiful it is to be thus welcomed! To be sure, as yet it is only a friendly greeting, and half in mockery, but this greeting shall one day resound from the throats of whole nations, and not in mockery. Shall they hail him, "Welcome, thou hero!" This he swears shall be, as he steps up to Mr. Lion, who extends both hands to him over his counter, and regards him tenderly.

"Here again, my Mohammed! They have been speaking of you all day, and three men have already been here to tell of your heroic deed. Let me see your hands. Yes, they are torn and bleeding. Yes, my boy, I have rejoiced with you, and am proud with you for having put those boys to shame."

"I thank you, sir," said he, earnestly; "yet it is not enough to conquer boys; one must also conquer men and nations!"

Mr. Lion regarded him with wonder. "What is this you are saying? what are you busying your brain with now?"

"With many things, sir; I desire you to help me provide for my future."

"I am delighted, Mohammed," said the merchant, regarding him with a friendly smile, "I am delighted to see you thoughtful of your future. I have often scolded your mother about you; you are tall and sensible for your age, are almost a young man, and it would become you to be taking care of yourself. But both your mother and your Uncle Toussoun are spoiling you in their anxiety to strew your pathway with rose-leaves, and guard you from every hardship."

"They would," said the boy, shrugging his shoulders, "if I allowed them, but I will not! I will bare my face to the storm, and walk on thorns instead of rose-leaves, in order that my feet may become hardened. Therefore, tell me, dear sir, what I am to do to provide for my future."

"That is hard to tell," replied Lion, with a sigh. "For every thing a certain something is necessary, which you, unfortunately, do not possess."

"And what is this something?" asked the boy, hastily.

"Money," replied the merchant. "It is not enough to pray to Allah, and to receive into one's soul the precepts of the Koran; one must also use one's hands industriously, and learn the precepts of worldly wisdom, and the very first of these is, 'Have money, and you can obtain all else.'"

"I will have money, that I may obtain all else!" exclaimed Mohammed; "only tell me how to procure it."

"That is just where the difficulty lies, you foolish boy," said the merchant, stroking his brown hair gently. "Those who rob and plunder make it much easier for themselves in the world, and I have known many a one to begin his career as a robber who, subsequently, ruled over men as a grand pacha. Yet I am confident that it is not in this manner you wish to acquire riches, but as an honest man."

"Yes, as an honest man! I desire to gain honor, magnificence, and wealth, by the power of my will and my intellect."

"Honor, magnificence, and wealth?" repeated Mr. Lion. "These are grand words, my boy! It will be very difficult to accomplish so much, and I can render you no assistance in doing so, yet I will take you into my business and try to make a merchant of you, if you wish it."

"Merchant!" repeated the boy, thoughtfully. "I have nothing that I could sell."

"Yet you can sell yourself. Do not look at me so angrily! I do not mean that you should sell yourself as a slave, but do business with your head, your work, and your good-will. Help me to wait on my customers, to sell goods, and to praise them with pleasing manners, and I will furnish you with food and clothing, and pay you monthly wages besides, which you can give to your mother."

"I should have to stand behind the counter, and play the amiable to people, as I have seen you do?"

"Yes, my son, that you would have to do."

"I should have to listen quietly to the gossips, spread out before them the carpets, turbans, and Persian shawls; and, as I have seen you do, cover the spots with my hands and praise the goods, and then hear them scold, and bargain, and cheapen?"

"Really, you will make a good merchant; I see you have learned a great deal already."

"I should, when the women stroll in and seat themselves at the counter, have to wait on them humbly with coffee, and beg them to do us the honor? Should have to hear them talk about their domestic affairs, their cats, and their dogs, and appear to be delighted with the sweetness of their voices, and the lustre of their eyes?"

"By your prophet, you are a finished merchant, and will make a splendid salesman!"

"No, I shall not!" cried the boy. "No, sir! I love you with my whole soul, and have often observed and admired how you understand your art, but, forgive me for saying so, I cannot become a merchant! Propose something that I can do."

"Very well! I will propose something else; become a writer, learn the art, understood by so few, of putting words spoken by others on paper with signs. I should be well pleased, as I need a writer. The one I have has grown old and lazy, and, though I can speak your language, I cannot write it. Yes, learn to write, and then you will be provided for permanently, for writers are rare, and—"

"I will not learn it!" said the boy, interrupting him; "I will have nothing to do with the pen. I will write my name with the sword on the faces of my enemies!"

"That would be a beautiful handwriting!' observed Mr. Lion, laughing. "It will, however, be some time before you can do that, and, in the mean while, I would advise you to go to old Scha-er Mehsed, the story-teller. He knows wonderful tales, and the whole history of the great Prophet Mohammed. You know, in the evenings, crowds assemble around him, and it fairly rains pennies. But Scha-er Mehsed has grown old, and hard to understand because he has lost his teeth. Go and listen to him, then take your seat on the stone and tell stories of the olden time yourself."

"No, Mr. Lion, that does not suit me either. I will first do great deeds before I tell of them. Not until I have grown old shall the men and women assemble around me; then they shall hear of my deeds. But to tell of the deeds of others only, would give me no pleasure. I see nothing is left me but to become a soldier. Yes, a soldier."

"I, too, believe that would be the best thing for you," said Mr. Lion, with a kindly nod of the head. "But then you must wait until you are larger and stronger, for they do not make soldiers of boys, and you are still a boy. At ten years of age one is not yet a man, my little hero. But at fifteen you will be a youth, and then you will be accepted as a soldier. And I prophesy for you a great and brilliant career as such. Until then, however, I promise to help your mother to take care of you, and, if I can serve you in any way, come to me, for you know I love you, and will gladly do what I can for you."

"Until then I will be the general of the boys of Cavalla, and they shall all bow down to me, and pay me tribute."

CHAPTER III.

BOYISH DREAMS.

SINCE that day a great change had taken place in Mohammed Ali. He was graver and more silent, and participated less in the games of the boys. He no longer laughed and jested as he had formerly done, but he was all the more busily occupied with his gun, inherited from his father, exercising himself in shooting, and almost always hitting his mark. He also strengthened his limbs by fencing with his old uncle, who had formerly been a soldier, or by throwing himself into the sea, to struggle with the waves and allow himself to be buffeted about by them for hours. The boy prepared himself to become a man, and he did so with his whole soul, and with the whole strength of his will.

He often wandered in solitude among the rocks on the heights, or lingered on the beach below; and when he would return to his mother, on such occasions, she could see reflected in his countenance the great thoughts that agitated her boy's soul. He seemed to her to grow visibly taller each day ; that the boy was transforming himself into a man with wonderful rapidity. She knew that this boy would become a hero ; she had seen it in the expression of his eyes while relating her dream, and she comprehended the longing which filled his soul, for her soul was strong and aspiring like his, and Mohammed had inherited his ambition and strong will from his mother Khadra.

"He thinks as I should think were I a man," said Khadra to herself, as she sat on the threshold of her door regarding her son. "Neither should I be contented with our present miserable existence if I were a man. I, too, should desire to go out and struggle with the world. Alas ! but I am only a poor widow, living a miserable, solitary life, awaiting the day when death shall call me, and unite me in Paradise with Ibrahim Aga, my master. But let the young eagle brood and think until his wings are grown, and then let him fly into the world out of this miserable, rocky nest. May Allah bless his purpose, and Mohammed the prophet protect him ! Allah il Allah !"

While the mother was praying, and looking out wistfully into the twilight, Mohammed was sitting in his rocky cave down on the shore.

This was as yet his only possession, his palace ! No one knew of this cave, discovered by the boy while wandering on the shore. He had crept into a narrow opening in the rock which he had observed among the cliffs, that was hardly large enough to admit of the passage of his slender body. He crept on his hands and knees, and noticed with delight that this opening widened into a cave. He went on, deeper and deeper into the darkness, when suddenly he saw a bright light overhead, and discovered that he was in a wide cave, lighted from above by a round opening as by a window.

Through this opening he could view the sea, and the sky above.

This cave was known to no one else, and Mohammed carefully preserved the secret of its existence.

This cave was his palace ! Here he could dream of the future; here, in impenetrable solitude, he could dwell with his thoughts; from here he could look up and implore counsel from the heavens above, or look down at the foaming sea beneath, and refresh his soul with its majesty.

By degrees he had made this cave habitable. Who knows but it may be necessary to seek it as a refuge from pursuit and danger some day? Who knows but that he may be compelled to seek safety here some day from his enemies, or even from his friends?

Whatever he could spare from the little sums of money which his mother occasionally gave him, or from the presents of Mr. Lion or his old uncle, he devoted to the purchase of bedding, or some other article of furniture of the kind used in the huts of the poor. And then at night, when no one could see him, he would creep with these things into his cave, his palace of the future. Sometimes, while sitting there dreaming, the deep-blue sky looking down upon him, the sun throwing a ray of golden light through the cave, strange visions would appear to him. The cave would transform itself into a glittering palace, and the wretched mat that lay on the ground became a luxurious silken couch, on which he reclined, smoking his *tschibak*, while slaves stood around in reverential attitudes, ready to do his bidding. When seated on his rickety stool—a costly possession—for it had been bought with the last remnant of his money, it seemed to him that, clothed in purple, he had mounted his throne, around which wondrous strains of melody resounded. It did not occur to him that it was the murmur of the waves beating upon the rock-bound shore without; to him they were the triumphant songs of his future greeting him, the ruler.

"A ruler, a hero, a prince, he is to be," said the prophetess to his mother, and he will do what he can to fulfil this prophecy.

It was with a great effort only that he could tear himself away from such ecstatic dreams; quit his hidden paradise, and go out into the world, into reality again.

One cannot live on dreams; one must eat, too. But it annoys him that he is subjected to this wretched necessity of eating.

"If I should have nothing to eat; if I should become so poor and miserable as to have no bread, must I then die because I am in the habit of eating?" he would ask himself, in angry tones.

"I will learn to live without eating!" he cried, in a loud voice.

For days he would wander about in the forests and among the rocks, at a distance from all human habitations, taking no food, in order that he might accustom himself to live on little.

On one occasion he remained absent from his mother's hut two days and nights, and Khadra awaited his return in deathly anxiety. Will he never return; has she lost him, her only son, the hope of her future, the blessing of her existence?

At last, on the third day, she sees him coming; pale and exhausted, he totters toward her, and yet his bearing is defiant, and his eye sparkles.

She hurries forward with extended arms to meet him. "Where have you been, my beloved; where were you tarrying in the distance, forgetting that a mother's heart was longing for you?"

He pressed his mother's hand to his lips, looking steadfastly into her eyes. "I was with my future, Mother Khadra," said he in a low voice. "I was with the days that are to come, the days when I shall stand on the palace, a man, a hero, sword in hand, at my feet a people looking up to me imploringly. You see, mother, your dream is fulfilled, the hero who stands up there has again transformed himself into your boy! He is here and greets you."

"But why is my boy pale and exhausted?" asked Sitta Khadra, anxiously, as she clasped him in her arms.

"I don't know!" said he, wearily. "It seems to me that my feet refuse to bear me longer, that something is drawing me upward. Let us go to the hut, mother."

He grasped her arm hastily and led her away as though he were quite strong, but Khadra observed that his lips trembled, and that his face was pallid.

"He looks hungry," she murmured to herself. "Yes, I see he is hungry! Buried in his thoughts, he has again forgotten to take food."

She said no more, but walked hastily to the hut and led him in. "Son of my heart, I have been awaiting you," said she, with an innocent air. "I did not wish to partake of our simple supper until my son had come home. Let us sit down and eat. Allah bless our meal!"

It does not escape her that his eye suddenly glitters as he looks at the bread and dates brought yesterday by the boys as his tribute.

With a quick motion he stretches out his hand toward the fruit, but suddenly withdraws it, as if ashamed of himself:

"It does not become children to seat themselves before their parents, and eat before they have broken bread. Eat, mother; seat yourself, and allow your son to wait on you."

That he might not feel hurt, she seated herself quickly and took part of the fruit offered her. She handed him some, and now human nature conquered the spirit, and he heartily ate of the fruit and bread.

"Where were you, my boy? Light of my eyes, where were you?" asked the mother.

"Up there among the rocks, and below on the shore," replied he, smiling.

"Where did you find food there? I know that eagles, hawks, and doves, find their food among the rocks, but for mankind there is no food there."

"And I found none, Mother Khadra; I must learn to do with little, to conquer hunger, and I fought with it for two days. See how I am rewarded!—my food never tasted so deliciously before."

"Eat, my boy! Allah bless your food and drink! How fortunate that I have something for your thirst, too! Uncle Toussoun Aga brought me to-day a bottle of Cyprian wine, a present from Mr. Lion. You must drink of it, my boy."

He shook his head. "No, Sitta Khadra, I will not drink of the wine sent you by the noble merchant to restore your strength. Water from the well, from the spring of life, is a better drink for me. For you, the Cyprian wine, for me the spring-wine that bubbles from the rock."

He took down the gourd cup from the wall, and went out and quenched his thirst with long draughts at the spring, and then returned to his mother. He was now restored to strength and vigor ; the color returned to his cheeks, and his knees no longer trembled.

"My eyes' delight, my Mohammed fresh and full of life again !" cried Mother Khadra. "Light of my life, I am glad to see you yourself again. But I beg you, my boy, not to make such cruel experiments on yourself. It is wholesome to harden the body, but not to abuse it, and you abuse your own handsome self when you torment yourself with hunger and thirst unnecessarily."

"Not unnecessarily, Mother Khadra," he replied, shaking his head. "He, only, who knows how to practise self-denial, can enjoy. At first I couldn't understand this, now I do, and have experienced it in myself. I have practised self-denial for two days, and now I have enjoyed ; and thus it shall be in the future, Sitta Khadra. I shall learn to do without, in order that I may enjoy. Do not scold me for this ; do not say, with the rest, that I am an obstinate boy ! I am not, mother, but I must prepare myself for the future which you have announced to me. Your dream must be realized, and therefore must I do what I am doing. Let me have my way, and remember that Allah is with me everywhere. And remember this, too, mother, that wherever I may be, I shall hear your call should you need me. If, at any time when I am not here, you should need me, you have only to step out before the door, and imitate the scream of the eagle when he hovers in the air over his nest, and announces to his brood that he is coming. You recollect hearing it when we were on the cliffs together the other day. I pointed to an eagle hovering in the air, imitated his cry, and begged you to do so too. It was not done without a purpose, mother : I wished you to learn his cry, in order that you, too, might call your brood in case of need."

The mother smiled. "A strange idea ! What would people think if I should step out before the door, and scream into the air in the tones of an eagle ?"

"Let people think what they please, mother," said he, with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders. "What care we ? They already laugh at and mock us. But a time shall come, Sitta Khadra, when they shall bow down before you, and I only implore that Allah may permit you to live to see the time when your son shall stand on the palace, and wield his sword over humanity. Why do you sigh, mother?" he asked hastily, and what he had never before observed, suddenly occurred to him; her cheeks were sunken, and her face pale. "Why do you weep, mother?"

"I know not, my son. I only fear the time is yet far distant when Mohammed Ali shall stand on the palace with uplifted sword, the nations bowed down before him! I am only afraid I shall not live to see this time."

"Are you ill, mother; are you ill?" cried the boy, anxiously and tenderly. He rushed to her, clasped her in his arms, and fixed his brown eyes on hers with an earnest, anxious look. "Tell me—I conjure you in the name of the prophet—tell me, are you ill, Sitta Khadra?"

She forced herself to regard him with a smile. "No, light of my eyes! beloved of my soul! When I see you, I am not ill; when I see and hear you, my heart is in health and at rest, and—"

"You have no disease, no pains?" asked her son, interrupting her. "Your cheeks are pale, and your lips tremble. Tell me, nothing ails you, you are quite well?"

"Quite well, my beloved, and nothing ails me. All that is wanting in my poor life is the moment when you shall have become a great man, honored by men, and blessed by Allah."

"Honored by men, I will become; the blessing of Allah you shall implore down upon my head, mother! You must only remain in health to see me in my grandeur. You will not pain me, mother, by falling ill, and following my father Ibrahim Aga, before you can say to him, 'My dream is realized, and your son Mohammed has become a great and mighty hero,' will you? Leave me not too soon, mother; promise to remain with me on earth until the prophecy is fulfilled."

"Dear boy!" said she, with a sad smile. "How can the poor child of earth promise what Allah must alone decide? We must walk as Allah directs, and submit to his will with humility, for thus it is written in the Koran: 'Before the great God who sits enthroned above the stars, bow thy head in humility; Allah determines, and man shall obey in pious submission.' So must we, my boy! Man is mortal, and passes away; as the withered leaf is wafted away by the wind and perishes, so the storm wind of life seizes upon man and destroys him."

"But not you, not you, mother!" cried the boy, fiercely grasping his mother's shoulders in childish anger. "No, I will not believe it, and it shall not be! The storm shall not destroy you, for you must live to see your son great and mighty, that he may recompense you for your days of sorrow and suffering."

"You hurt me," said his mother, gently releasing her shoulders from his grasp. Mohammed burst into tears that poured down his cheeks in streams.

The mother kissed them away. "My son, pearl of my existence!—only light in life's night!—my beloved son, what would I be without you? what should I do in the dark night without the lustre of this star? I kiss these eyes, son of my heart, and bless you with Allah's blessing! Be strong and brave, my son, and weep not! Leave tears to women. You are a man in spite of your thirteen years, therefore weep not; even though the worst should befall, weep not."

"The worst? What does that mean, mother? You wish to prepare me, I read it in your look; you wish to prepare me for your death! If you die, I will die, too; if you die, my whole life will I bury in the sea, and—"

He could speak no further, and heart-sick he bowed his head upon his mother's shoulder.

"You are not yourself, poor boy," said she, gently, as she bathed his forehead with water; "you see the body still governs the mind, and long fasting has made you weak. Remember this, my boy. To keep the mind vigorous you must give the body nourishment; if you had not fasted for two days, you would not weep now. Not because you are alarmed, but because you are weak, do you weep."

He understood these words of heroism; he understood that maternal love had given her strength to console him with these quiet, matter-of-fact utterances. He tenderly kissed her hands, murmuring: "Sitta Khadra, you are a heroine, and I will learn from you to be a hero."

They sat in each other's embrace for a long time, silent, and yet they were speaking to each other with their thoughts and souls, and understood what soul said to soul, and heart to heart. Often, after long years, will the son still think of this hour when he sat by his mother's side, in solitude and silence, his head resting on her bosom—in his glittering palace will he still think of it? In the fulness of his magnificence, with the, soul's eye, will he look into this poor, dark little chamber will he longingly think of his mother, of his first and holiest love?

"Promise me, Mohammed," said she, after a long silence, "promise me that you will never fast and torture yourself so long again."

"I promise you, Sitta Khadra," he replied in a low voice, "you are right; the body must be strengthened that the soul may be strong. I need a strong body that I may be able to climb the rocky pathway of life to the summit, to the eagle's eyry, far above the lowliness of life. I promise you, mother, that from this day I will no longer torture my body, but it shall be taught to defy want, and to subordinate itself to the mind. Do not scold, Mother Khadra, if I am often away from you. In solitude I learn. I converse with the invisible spirits that hover about me in the air. They teach me wondrous things, which I cannot relate to you to-day, but which help me to prepare for the future. Do not forget, mother, when I am away from you, and you need me, to call me with the eagle's cry."

A faint smile trembled on her lips. "If, however, son of my heart, I should be unable to utter this cry, if my voice should be too weak to reach you—"

He again regarded her with an anxious, inquiring look. "Can that be, Sitta Khadra? Do you believe your voice can become so weak?"

"Be reassured, my son; I neither believe nor fear it, but yet it might be."

"Yes, it might be," said he, passing his trembling hand across his brow. "I shall go to Uncle Toussoun Aga and tell him how to call me. Only promise me, mother, that, if you need me, and are not able to call yourself, you will send for uncle and tell him to do so. I could otherwise have no peace; could not attend to my work and occupation, unless I knew that you would have me called to you when you need me."

"It shall be so, my son. When I need you, you shall be called, and now do not allow yourself to be disturbed in your occupations. Fly out, young eagle, out into the air, out among the rocks, and learn from heaven and earth what to do to prepare for your future."

She kissed his brow and laid her hand on his head in a blessing. Mohammed kissed this hand, and then sprang to his feet and went to his old uncle Toussoun Aga. With perfect gravity he begged permission to teach him the eagle's cry, that he might be able to call him when his mother should need him.

The old man looked up from the fishing-nets, at which he was working, in utter bewilderment. "What possesses you, Mohammed Ali? What an idea to take into your head, to train the old fellow who is good for nothing but to make nets for the fishermen, in which they catch the red mareles and the blue flyers—to train this old fellow to imitate the eagle and scream like the king of the air!"

"And yet you must learn to cry like this same eagle, uncle!" With resistless force he drew his uncle from his mat, and almost compelled him to go up with him to the verge of the rock. High above where the cliff projects far out into the sea, there, with a serious air, Mohammed taught his uncle the eagle's cry.

At first his uncle refused to imitate him and utter the cry as directed, but Mohammed regarded him with so wild and angry a look, and then entreated him in such soft and tender tones to do it for his dear mother's sake, whose call would, perhaps, be too weak to reach him, that the old man could at last no longer refuse.

When he had imitated him in a loud, shrill voice, Mohammed smiled and nodded approvingly.

"That will do. And if I should be ever so distant and hear this cry, I will come home to mother. But tell me, Uncle Toussoun Aga, tell me, by all that is holy, by the prophet and by the name of Allah, tell me the truth: is my mother ill?"

Toussoun Aga's countenance assumed a very grave expression, and he looked down confused.

"Answer me!" cried Mohammed, vehemently. "Is my mother ill? In the name of the prophet, I command you to tell me the truth!"

"Do not demand it, son of my beloved brother, Ibrahim Aga," said the old man, sorrowfully. "It does not become man to pry into the mysteries of Allah. We are all in Allah's hand, and what he determines must be, and we should not attempt to look into the future."

"Yet tell me—and may Allah forgive me for wishing to look into the future—is my mother ill?"

"She looks pale," murmured the old man. "When she walks her breath is short, and, when she gives me her hands in greeting, I feel them burn as though fire flowed in her veins. But it may pass away, nephew. She may recover; she is still weak from her former illness; you recollect the severe fever she had? But she will recover, and for this purpose Mr. Lion sent her the strengthening wine; it will do her good, and she will get better."

"Yes, she will get better," said the boy. "It is impossible she should die, for I should then be entirely alone in the world."

"Entirely alone?" asked the old man, regarding him reproachfully. "As long as Toussoun Aga lives, his nephew, Mohammed Ali, is not entirely alone."

Mohammed held out his hand. "Thanks, uncle." He nodded to the old man, turned away, and sprang off over the rocks with such rapid bounds that old Toussoun looked after him in amazement.

"He leaps like a gazelle. Light is his step, and splendid his figure. How long will he still bless his mother's sight? how long shall my old eyes be gladdened by this young gazelle, this young eagle?"

The old man bowed his head upon his breast, and two tears trickled slowly down his cheeks.

CHAPTER IV.

PREMONITION OF DEATH.

SINCE the day when Mohammed had first conceived a dark foreboding of his mother's insidious disease, he had become more earnest and gloomy in his disposition. The other boys avoided meeting and coming into collision with him; they paid the well-earned tribute of fruits from their parents' gardens, and assumed an almost humble demeanor in his presence. He sometimes challenged them to race or wrestle with him, but only the strongest and most active would enter into such trials with him, and he always remained the victor. They were in the habit of turning down a side street when they saw him advancing toward them, and, when they observed him among the rocks with his little gun on his shoulder, they would hide themselves behind some rocky projection and remain concealed until he had passed. But Mohammed saw them. His eye would glitter when he passed their hiding-places, and a contemptuous smile play about his lips. "The hawks fear the eagle," he would murmur to himself, "but the eagle will some day pluck out their feathers and show them that he is master."

Striving to earn money to procure little luxuries for his mother, he would more rarely absent himself from home for longer periods than formerly. When the storm raged, and the boldest fishermen feared to venture over to Imbro where their nets were laid, Mohammed would offer to go for them, provided they gave him double wages; and the fishermen, fearing that the wild waves might bear away their nets filled with the rare fish that only came up from the deep during the storm, would willingly accede to his demands. One day when the sea was roaring and foaming wildly, one of the fishermen stood upon the shore imploring Allah to save the nets he had taken to Imbro the day before, and which, assuredly filled with the rarest fish, had perhaps already become a prey to the waves.

"Why not go after them?" said a mocking voice behind him. "Go over and get your nets."

The fisherman regarded the intrepid boy Mohammed, who now stood at his side, with severity. "No one would venture out in such a storm. Moreover, this is Thursday, the evil day on which the ghins, who draw men into the deep, are abroad. I must therefore lose my rich catch and the nets besides. Your old uncle, Toussoun Aga, will be well pleased, however, for it will take all I have to purchase new nets from him."

"My uncle can make no nets at present," said Mohammed. "He has been ill for weeks; I therefore advise you to save those you have, as you will find it impossible to procure as good ones from anybody else."

"A good piece of advice!" cried the fisherman, angrily. "But what am I to do if the storm tears my nets away?"

"Try to save your nets," replied Mohammed, laughing. "What will you give me if I go over and get them and the catch of fish besides?"

"You wouldn't attempt it! Look how the waves roar and open their wide jaws as if to devour you even here on the shore! You will not venture out."

"I know the waves," replied the boy, "and I know your boat. It glides over the water like a nutshell, and the monsters of the deep love me and will safely bear me over to the island on their backs. I will go if you will give me what I ask."

"What do you ask?"

"You shall give me half your fish. If I bring them over safely, call four of your friends; let them fairly estimate the price, and then pay me my share. Will you agree to this, Omar?"

"No, I will not! This is unheard of!" cried the fisherman, angrily.

"Just as you please," said Mohammed, quietly. "You would rather lose the whole, than save half, and the nets besides. Consider well that Toussoun Aga has perhaps made his last nets, and that yours were quite new, and the finest quality he ever made."

"Be satisfied with a fourth part of the fish, and the bargain is made," said Omar, as he looked longingly toward the island, now, as the waves had subsided somewhat, visible as a dark spot on the horizon. The boy regarded him angrily.

"I am no tradesman, and will not be cheapened. Half of the fish, or I remain here."

"Well, if it must be, take half, you usurer!" cried the enraged fisherman.

"Where is your boat?" asked Mohammed, quietly.

"Down there in the inlet. And now be quick about it, boy!"

"Directly! But every thing in its order. You must first acknowledge the bargain before witnesses."

"Before witnesses?" cried the enraged fisherman. "Is not Allah the witness of an honest man's promise?"

"He is. But who knows but the roaring of the storm has prevented your words from ascending to his ear?" replied Mohammed, with a mocking smile. "I will bring Mr. Lion; you can repeat your words before him."

Before Omar could prevent him, the boy bounded away to the merchant, and begged him to come and witness Omar's promise. The merchant willingly followed his favorite in spite of the storm and the spray which the waves tossed up to the spot where the men were standing. When he learned what was in contemplation, and when Omar had repeated his promise, the merchant shook his head resolutely. "This cannot and shall not be. You shall not drive the boy out in such weather; the sea is an open grave, as it were!"

"Mr. Lion!" cried Mohammed, advancing toward him, his arms folded on his breast. "Look at me! Why do you call me a boy? Am I not taller than many of the men on our island; am I not stronger than many boys of eighteen?"

"It is true," said Mr. Lion. "Though only fourteen, you are no longer a boy. I beg your pardon, Mohammed Ali, for considering your years and not your strength. But all the same, whether youth or boy, no one goes to sea in such weather."

"I will show you that one does go to sea in such weather, when good wages are to be made!" exclaimed Mohammed, as he, before the merchant could prevent him, quickly ran down to the little inlet, loosened Omar's boat from its fastening, and sprang into it.

He was soon out among the waves. They roar and surge around him, but what cares he? He throws himself down in the boat and holds fast with both hands. The waves alternately lift him aloft, and bury him out of sight. It is splendid sport. It is long since Mohammed has felt so well as now, when tossed in his frail skiff on the foaming deep. He shouts in exultation:

"Thus will I battle my life long! Thus will I ever vanquish difficulties through life! And see, the wind is favorable, and I shall get over!"

What he had exultingly shouted to the waves, took place; he got safely over, found the nets in good condition, drew them ashore, and waited on the rock until the storm had somewhat subsided. Really it seemed that Sitta Khadra was right: his agathodæmon watched over him, for, sooner than usual, the tempest calmed down, and the sun broke forth from behind the clouds. It was now a comparatively easy matter for Mohammed to get back to the opposite shore where Omar was awaiting him with several of his comrades. The fisherman's face was angry and lowering. It annoyed him that he had not waited for the storm to go down, instead of making the bargain with Mohammed, for he must now keep his word and pay the boy what he had earned. This day his rich catch of fish gave Omar no pleasure. His face grew darker and darker, while the men were opening the nets and counting the fish. It was well that the shrewd boy had caused Omar to repeat his promise before a witness, and before so highly esteemed a witness, for the fisherman would have otherwise refused, in all probability, to share the harvest of his nets with Mohammed.

He was now compelled to yield to the decision of the fishermen, who declared that the half of the fish caught were worth at least four ducats. The boy's eyes sparkled with delight as Omar reluctantly and hesitatingly drew the money from his long leather purse and handed it to him.

"It will bring you no blessing!" growled the fisherman. "You are a greedy, headstrong boy; you deprive the father of a family of half his hard earnings. The ghins will pay you back for what you have swindled me out of."

"I have swindled you out of nothing. I risked my life for four ducats, have earned them honestly, and it does not become you to abuse me for it before these people.—Speak yourselves, you men, am I right?"

"Certainly you are right," they cried with one voice.

"No; no one can abuse you for receiving your well-earned wages," said Mr. Lion, beckoning to the boy to follow him. "You must be exhausted—come with me to my home. You shall dine with me and drink a glass of wine. Your clothes are thoroughly drenched; you shall dry them at the fire."

Mohammed laughed. "Wet I am, to be sure, but the fire that burns in my veins will soon dry the stuff. I will, however, gladly eat a little and drink a glass of wine with you. It was a hard fight with the sea-monsters, they seemed to roar in my ears, 'We will have you, we will pull you down!' And yet it sounded sweetly! There is no finer music than when the sea-monsters come up from the deep and sing their wild songs."

"You are a strange being," said Mr. Lion, regarding him lovingly. "I rejoice in you, and, if it were not that people would say of me that I wished to convert a Mussulman to my religion, I would gladly adopt you as my son. Tell me, if I should leave this place, would you go with me to the land of the Franks, accept my religion, and become the heir of my fortune?"

"And you ask this? Say that it was a jest! For you surely could not desire that the son of his father should become a renegade! No, Mr. Lion, a Mussulman who could allow himself to be converted into a Christian dog—pardon me for having uttered this word, it was not intended for you, but—"

"But only for the Christian dog!" said Mr. Lion, smiling. "Let us leave it as it is. You have offended me, and I you. Let us be friends again, and empty a glass with each other."

Mohammed accompanied him to his house and ate with him and drank of the fiery Cyprian wine. After having refreshed and strengthened himself, he turned to Mr. Lion with a merry countenance :

"Now to a little business matter that I have to transact with you ; for, if I had not met you below, I should have come up here after you. Look at my four magnificent ducats ; I should like to invest them with you."

"You are a shrewd lad, and are disposed to improve your good fortune. That is right, and without so doing, one makes no progress in the world."

"You shall invest them with me, and they shall bear you good interest."

"Not in that way," cried Mohammed. "I have no desire to lay a grain of sand on a mountain, with the expectation that it will bear fruit, whereas it is only lost among the others. No, I wish to buy goods. You have always been kind and friendly to me, and from me you will certainly not demand as much as from the rich people of the town, or the governor."

"You are right, Mohammed. You shall have the goods at the price they cost me. What will you have ?"

"A magnificent silk dress, and a long white veil, such as the ladies of rank wear."

"See, see !" exclaimed the merchant, regarding the boy, whose eyes fairly sparkled in amazement. "You were right, Mohammed, you are no longer a boy. You are in love, and it is assuredly a bride to whom Mohammed wishes to present this love-offering ?"

"No, Mr. Lion, no bride, but a love-offering the articles certainly are."

"Only an amorous intrigue, then ?" asked the merchant, shrugging his shoulders. "You are beginning early with such things, Mohammed. Yet I am glad you are not about to affiance yourself, as is customary here at your age, with a girl ten years old, whose eyes please you, or who has a good dower ; ten years later, after she has been long-veiled, and you no longer know how she looks, you marry her and take a wife to your home, whom to be sure you have often seen veiled, and often spoken to, but of whose present looks you know nothing."

"If we do not like her, we send her back to her mother.

There is nothing that binds us to keep the woman we do not like, and our prophet has arranged this very wisely—while you Christians must keep the woman, though you sometimes find yourselves very badly deceived. Praise to Allah, and thanks to the prophet!"

"Then it is an amorous intrigue? Well, I will not demand the reason, for the young gentleman certainly knows the first law of love—discretion," observed the merchant, with a smile.

"I have no use for that law," said Mohammed, proudly. "You shall know. This love-offering is for my mother. She is the only woman I love, and she will also be the only one I shall ever love. Give me a beautiful dress, richly embroidered, and a veil adorned with golden fringe. She shall go no more to the mosque so poorly dressed. She shall be magnificently arrayed, that she may be envied by all other women. Give me something very handsome."

"You shall have it, my boy. Excuse me for calling you so again, but this time it is done to show you my love for your childlike heart. Come with me to the hall. You shall select the handsomest dress, regardless of the cost."

He led him to the hall in which he kept the magnificent goods from which the ladies in the harems of the Turks of rank were accustomed to select their festal dresses, and spread the beautiful goods out before Mohammed. The boy's eyes sparkled with pleasure as he beheld this costly array. He selected a magnificent piece of purple satin embroidered with silver, and an Indian veil of the finest make, adorned with fringe of real gold. It was a suit that would have delighted the daughters of the sultan at Stamboul, and it did not occur to Mohammed that it was worth at least ten times as much as he had to give for it. Mr. Lion took the four ducats with a smile, and handed him the beautiful goods wrapped in gilt-edged paper. Mohammed, proud of his bargain, took the package, and ran in breathless haste to his mother.

"Here, mother, I bring you something you will like!" he cried.

"Yourself?" asked Khadra, with a gentle smile. "I need nothing else."

"Yes, Mother Khadra, you do need something else. You need a dress and a veil, such as the other ladies of rank wear. Do not be alarmed, mother, it is honestly acquired. There, take it, and rejoice!" He spread the costly goods out before her, expecting her to cry out with delight. But she only became sad; on her pale cheeks glowed the roses which Death bestows on those whom he is about to call to himself.

"My son!" said she. "This magnificence is not for me!"

"Yes, Mother Khadra, it is indeed for you. Ask the merchant, Lion; I paid for it honestly. You think, perhaps, I have noticed that the dress in which you go to the mosque is torn and faded? You think, perhaps, I do not know that your head-dress has often been mended? I well know that it has been. I know, too, that the women laugh and say mockingly: 'She has not even a Sabbath dress, and appears before Allah in the garb of a beggar!' Therefore, I rejoice at having been able to procure a new dress for you, mother. Have it made, in order that you may appear before Allah in festive attire."

"No, my son, it is impossible," said Khadra sadly, as Mohammed held out the costly package.

"Why impossible?" cried he, excitedly.

"Because it does not become the widow of Ibrahim, the poor woman, to array herself in garments of purple, gold-embroidered satin, like the ladies of rank. The women would laugh at and mock me more than ever if I should wear such magnificent garments instead of my faded dress. Neither can I wear the veil. You can preserve all this to give to your bride some day. It does not become old Sitta Khadra to adorn herself thus."

"You are not old, Mother Khadra," said he, in half-tender, half-angry tones. "You are still young, and when you adorn yourself with these garments, there will be no handsomer woman in all Cavalla than Sitta Khadra. I beg you to put them on; but, to please me, leave the veil a little open, as the other women do, that people may see how beautiful my mother is."

"This is folly, and I am glad no one else hears your audacious words. No chaste woman opens her veil to permit the gaze of disrespectful men to fall on her, and my son Mohammed does not wish to blush for his mother. My son, take back this package to Mr. Lion. I cannot wear such clothes."

"You will not take them?" said the boy, hastily seizing the package. "What my heart's warmest love offers, you reject?"

"I reject it," said she, gently. "I have no need of such clothes."

"Very well," cried he, defiantly. "If you do not need these clothes, I will give them to the mermaids. They, too, like fine clothes, and they will thank me more for that which I have bought with my life. Yes, I will do this!"

He rushed to the door with such violence that Khadra could hardly recall him. "Where are you going, Mohammed?"

"To the cliffs. What my mother despises I will throw into the sea."

"Well, if you are about to do that, it shall be as you wish," said the mother, leading him back from the door. "If the mermaids are to have these beautiful things, it is better Mother Khadra should keep them."

"You promise me to wear these clothes?" said he, a smile suddenly illuminating his face.

Khadra seated herself, spread out the beautiful goods, and regarded them with a mournful smile. "It looks like mockery."

"No, not like mockery, but like pure love," said the boy, eagerly. "My love dresses you in purple and gold, and I wish to see Sitta Khadra the most brilliant among women." A blissful smile suffused itself over his features. But suddenly this smile disappeared, and his countenance assumed an expression of care and anxiety. At this moment he saw how pale his mother was. Her pallor contrasted strangely with the purple lustre of the goods she held in her hands.

"You are not ill, Mother Khadra; you are not suffering?" said he, in the same anxious tone in which he had so often asked.

"No, my son, I am not ill," said she, regarding him calmly.

"When I shall some day wear this beautiful dress, and this gold-embroidered veil, you will take delight in me. Thank you, child of my heart, light of my eyes! Thank you for this splendid present! I will hold it in honor while life lasts."

"I thank you for accepting it, and beg you not to be angry with me for having been so violent," said Mohammed, entreatingly, as he kissed his mother's extended hand. "Tell me once more, mother, are you well; do you feel no pain?"

"I feel well, and am not suffering," said she, regarding him lovingly. "I should gladly see you indulge yourself in one of your walks to the cliffs or mountains. It is long since you have taken one. I feel better than usual. I shall go to your sick uncle to wait on him, and when I return I shall lie down. You need not fear that I am waiting for you. Go to the mountains, beloved of my heart!"

"I shall do so gladly," he cried, embracing and kissing her heartily. He then walked with hasty steps to the door of the hut, and out into the free air.

CHAPTER V.

THE STORY-TELLER.

"I HAVE done work enough to day," murmured Mohammed to himself, as, after having left his mother, he walked through the dirty suburb to the stairway hewn in the rock that led down to the cliffs. "Yes, I have worked enough, and mother is well; I will therefore go to my paradise, and rest there awhile."

He sprang down the stairway and walked hastily toward the cliffs. After looking cautiously around, he crept through the narrow opening in the rocks into the passage. The silence did him good, and a happy smile played about his lips. "Here I am king," he cried, loudly and joyously. "This is my realm, and I shall soon enter my throne-chamber. How have I longed for this! how glad am I!" Suddenly he stood still.

"What were Mother Khadra's words?" he asked himself. "'Only he who practises self-denial can enjoy.' Have I not always said to myself that I would accustom myself to want, and learn to enjoy by denying myself that which pleases me? Have I not said that I would not walk on rose-leaves, but learn to tread on thorns, that my feet might become inured to pain? And now, like a foolish child, I am delighted at the prospect of entering my cave, my throne-chamber! 'Only he who practises self-denial can enjoy.' Remember that, Mohammed, and learn to practise self-denial; I will learn it!" he cried so loudly that his voice resounded throughout the entire cave.

He turned and retraced his steps. "I would gladly have gone into my cave, would gladly have reclined on my mat, have looked up at the blue sky, and down into the beautiful sea, that tells me such wondrous stories. Folly! I can hear stories elsewhere. Scha-er Mehsed tells stories, too, and on the whole that is more convenient than to tell them to myself."

He walks on hastily, without turning once to look back at his beloved grotto, walks on into the world, to men whom he does not love, and who do not love him.

He will learn to practise self-denial, and joyfully he now says to himself: "I am already learning it, and now I can also enjoy."

At this moment he observed Tschorbadji Hassan, who had just turned a corner of the street, advancing, followed by his servants.

When he perceived the boy, he stood still and greeted him with a gracious smile. Mohammed, his arms folded on his breast, inclined his head profoundly before the mighty man.

"See, Mohammed! The splendid shot! You come at the right moment, Mohammed; I had already sent out a slave after you. Osman, my poor sick son, craves a strange repast. He has seen pigeons whirling through the air, and thinks, probably, because he knows they are not easily to be had, that there can be nothing better in the world than a roasted wild-pigeon. Now, I know, Mohammed Ali, that no one can use a gun better than yourself, and it would give me great satisfaction to have you procure some of these birds for my son."

"I will do it gladly, because it is for Osman," replied Mohammed. "I will bring them myself, within the hour. I beg you, gracious master, to tell your son that I am glad to be able to do something for him. I must be off after my gun."

Mohammed withdraws himself with a total absence of ceremony, not waiting until Tschorbadji Hassan Bey dismisses him with a gracious wave of the hand. He flies to his mother's hut, takes down his gun from the wall, and loads it. He then climbs rapidly among the cliffs in search of the wild-pigeons for the poor sick Osman.

In an hour, Mohammed returned with his game. As he walked along, carrying the four birds in his hand, he said to himself with a smile: "Was it not well that I learned to deny myself a pleasure? And here I have the recompense, the enjoyment. For it is a recompense to be able to gratify a wish of dear good Osman; he was always so kind to me."

He now entered the court-yard of the palace in which Tschorbadji Hassan Bey resided. An Armenian slave stood at the gate, who seemed to have been awaiting the boys. He bowed profoundly, which he had never done before, and announced that his grace Osman Bey was in the garden, and had ordered that Mohammed Ali should bring the pigeons himself, and that Tschorbadji Hassan was also there awaiting him.

"Show me the way. I will follow," said Mohammed, whose tranquil countenance gave no indication that he felt flattered at the great honor of being admitted to the garden.

The Armenian led the way with an air of profound respect. Proudly, his head erect, Mohammed followed him through the wide hall of the palace and into the garden.

The fragrance arising from the carefully-cultivated flower-beds was delightful; the kiosks and baldachins were so charming! "Paradise must be like this," thought Mohammed, and he breathed the fragrant air with delight. But he turned his head neither to the right nor to the left, that no one might observe how wondrously beautiful everything seemed to him, and that he had never before seen any thing so magnificent.

There, under the beautiful tent with the golden tassels, and the gold-glittering star—there, on a couch, reclined a pale, thin boy, and at his side, on a chair richly embroidered, sat Tschorbadji Hassan.

As Mohammed now advanced with elastic step, his head erect, the two looked at him in admiration.

"How splendid he looks!" murmured the pale boy. "That is health, father, and life. He is just my age, and only look at me!"

The tschorbadji suppressed a sigh, and smiled gently as he looked at his son. "You are ill, my Osman. Allah will grant you speedy recovery, and then you will become strong and healthy like Mohammed Ali.—Well!" he cried to the boy who had stood still at some distance with his birds in his hand—"well, I see you have kept your word, and brought my son the wild-pigeons."

"I have, and am glad that I was able to do so," replied Mohammed, as he now came nearer in obedience to the bey's request, and greeted the pale boy with a joyous smile.

"Give me your hand, Mohammed," said the young bey, who had partially risen from his cushions, and was supporting himself on his elbow. Timidly, Mohammed took the boy's pale, thin hand in his own.

"Tell me, Mohammed, why do you not come to see me oftener? You know how glad I always am to see you."

"Master, I did not visit you, because it does not become the poor to intrude upon the rich and noble," replied Mohammed, his eyes fixed with an anxious expression on Osman's pale face.

"Rich and noble!" repeated Osman, with a sigh. "You are rich, Mohammed, for you are healthy. You are noble, Mohammed, for the inhabitants of the sea and of the air must obey you. You have power, and that is nobility."

The tschorbadji was displeased with these humble words of his son, and his brow became clouded.

"I think you should be content with your riches and nobility, my son," said he.—"Come, hand me the pigeons, Mohammed."

He took the beautifully feathered birds from Mohammed's hand, looked at them, and let their feathers play in the sunlight. "Yes, they are still warm; so the world goes. An hour since they disported themselves in life's sunshine. The child of man comes, sends a few shot through their bodies, and their glory is at an end. But, I thank you, Mohammed, for having so quickly complied with our wish. Here is your reward." He took two gold-pieces from his purse and handed them to the boy in his outstretched hand.

Mohammed did not take them. He drew back at the words of the governor, a deep color suffusing itself over his cheeks.

Osman perceived this, and motioned to him to come nearer to his couch. "Mohammed," said he, "father forgot to add for what purpose he wished to give you the money. Not for yourself. I know that your procuring these pigeons for me was an act of friendship. You have always been friendly to me, and I shall never forget what you did for me the other day."

"What was it?" asked the tschorbadji, with surprise.

"You know nothing of it, father. I did not mention it to you because I feared it might make you angry," replied Osman, gently. "I had had myself carried out on the rock. You know I like to rest there, in the sunlight, under the olive-tree that stretches out its limbs over the water. From that point you can look so far out over the sea. There you can see where heaven and earth unite, and strange dreams and wishes come over me there. The sea murmurs at my feet in such wondrous, mysterious tones, that my heart warms and my breast expands. The physician, too, had said that I should breathe the fresh air of the cliffs very often, and I had been carried out, and lay there at rest in sweet, solitary silence. I did not observe that the sky was darkening, and a storm coming on. It also escaped the notice of the two servants who had carried me out in the chair. Now that the rain already began to fall in large drops, they became alarmed, and both ran away rapidly to procure a covered palanquin, as the physician had said I must be carefully guarded against taking cold. They had hardly gone and left me alone when it began to rain harder, and I felt the large drops slowly trickling down upon me through the leaves of the olive-tree. The rain was very cold. The storm raged and tore the protecting foliage of the tree apart. Suddenly I heard footsteps. It was Mohammed Ali. He was rapidly passing by, but when he saw me lying there under the tree, alone, he came up to me, and understood the situation at a glance. In spite of my resistance, he spread his body over me, and protected me from the rain and discomfort.

"When the servants arrived with the palanquin I had remained perfectly dry, while Mohammed was wet to the skin. I begged him to come with me. I begged him to accept a gift. He refused both, and cried, laughing, as he ran away to escape my further thanks: 'For me it was only a welcome bath! You it would have hurt, Osman.'"

"Good, by Allah! That was well done," said the tschorbadji, with his aristocratic smile. "You served my son as an umbrella. I thank you for it, Mohammed, and will reward you. A new mantle shall be brought you, for I perceive that your own is torn and old."

"I thank you, master. It is good enough for me. This mantle is an inheritance from my father. Mother preserved it for ten years, and now I wear it, and wear it with pride, as a souvenir of my father. Thanks for your kind offer."

"Then take the money," said the tschorbadji. "You see I still hold it in my hand."

"Thanks, master, I have no need of the money."

"You must take it, Mohammed," said Osman, gently. "As I told you before, father has forgotten to add for what purpose he gives it. You are to go and hear the new scha-er, the story-teller. Do you know him already?"

"No, Osman, I do not. What of this scha-er?"

"I have heard him much spoken of," replied Osman, gently. "He is a rival of the old scha-er, Mehsed. You know the old one always sits in the middle of the market-place, on a stone, and tells the people stories of the olden time, and of the magnificence of the Turkish Empire. Now a new story-teller has come, from Constantinople it is said, and people say his stories are very beautiful. But he does not seat himself on a stone in the middle of the market, but in the wide hall of a store. There he has hired a corner, and there he sits. Around himself, as far as his voice reaches, he has fastened a rope to stakes, and whoever wishes to enter the circle thus formed must pay to hear his stories. I should like to do so, too, and have often entreated my father to allow me, but they say it would excite me too much, and that the air of the hall would be too close for me. Therefore, Mohammed, I beg you to go there for me, listen to the stories, and then come and repeat them to me. You see it was for this purpose father gave you the money.—Is it not so, father?"

"Yes, my boy, it shall be so if you desire it. I give him the money that he may hear the new scha-er, and if it entertains and pleases you, Mohammed shall come to you and relate what he has heard."

"Will you afford me this pleasure, Mohammed? I am not strong and healthy like you; I cannot climb the rocks like you; cannot sit on the cliffs and listen to the voice of the sea and the storm; cannot, like you, enjoy the delight of taking exercise in the open air! Here I lie on my bed, and all that is good and beautiful must come to me, if I am to enjoy it. Then come to me, Mohammed Ali!"

With a kindly look, he again held out his pale, attenuated hand, and Mohammed felt that warm tears were trickling down his cheeks, and that somehow he could not speak while the pale handsome boy was looking at him so entreatingly. He took Osman's hand and pressed it heartily in his own.

"I accept the money from Tschorbadji Hassan," said he, in low, soft tones. "I shall go and listen to the new scha-er, and, if you wish, Osman, I shall come to-morrow, and every day, to relate to you what I have heard; and it will please me if it gives you pleasure."

"I thank you, Mohammed, and beg you to come to-morrow ready to relate to me.—Give me the money, father," said he, addressing his father, with a gentle smile. "I will give it to Mohammed for the scha-er."

He took the money, and Mohammed willingly accepted it from him, and thanked him.

"I will go to the scha-er at once, for this is his hour, I believe."

He bowed hastily and slightly before the tschorbadji, but profoundly and reverentially before the poor pale boy, and rapidly walked back toward the gate, thinking not of the beautiful flowers that surrounded him, rejoicing only at being able to do something for Osman Bey, and rejoicing, too, at the prospect of listening to the scha-er.

It was just the hour at which the new scha-er, the rival of old Mehsed, began to relate his stories in the hall. With an earnest, respectful air, the men and boys sat around in the wide circle on their mats, and listened, slowly moving their bodies to and fro, to what the scha-er was relating.

Mohammed noiselessly entered the circle, and seating himself as close as he could in front of the scha-er, listened in breathless attention to the loud, resonant voice that told of the glories of the past:

"I have not come to tell you of the fatherland to-day, not of Turkish might and grandeur. Your humble servant has been proclaiming to you their wonders for the last few days," said he. "To-day I have turned my gaze toward distant worlds and kingdoms. I am about to tell you of the provinces converted into parts of our realm by the power of the sultan. Have you heard of the land that lies over there beyond the sea—the land of the Egyptians? Great is the history of this people, and from it we can learn that Allah alone is great, and that, next to him, and next to the prophet, nothing is so great as our emperor and master, our Sultan Selim, at Stamboul, on his imperishable throne. I told you yesterday of the origin of the kingdom of Egypt, and of the struggles carried on by barbarian hordes against each other. I then went on to tell you of the caliphs of Bagdad, how they had ruled in Egypt, and how they, too, were overthrown in their magnificence. Now listen. Egypt was lost to the caliphs of Bagdad; after long struggles their rule was at an end forever. A fortunate soldier, named Tokid, possessed himself of the rich and fertile kingdom that lies beyond the ocean. He held the reins of government with a strong hand, and an army of four hundred thousand men spread themselves over the whole land, like a swarm of hornets and grasshoppers, and held the trembling people in subjection. But he died, and a black slave named Kafour, took the sceptre from the hands of the dying man, and said, 'He gave it to me as to his successor.' And the four hundred thousand hornets and grasshoppers repeated these words, and the nation bowed its head and submitted to the rule of this black man.

"But one man had the courage to defy this slave. He was a descendant of the house of Ali, which could boast of being the house of the great prophet.

"Mahadi Obeidallah was the name of this grandson of Ali. He was strong and mighty before Allah, and he held in his strong hand the green flag of the prophet, of his ancestor, an heir-loom in his family, as he landed from his ships with his troops, at Alexandria, the great city that lies on the shore of Africa, and belongs to the realm of Egypt.

"Nothing could resist the descendant of the prophet, and Mahadi Obeidallah erected his throne in Alexandria. The conquest of Egypt, begun by him, was finished by his grandson, Moëz. He brought a hundred thousand men, commanded by his vizier Jauhar, to Alexandria, and marched with them through the desert toward the great city of Fostal, which Caliph Amrou had built.

"Near this great city, Jauhar founded another with splendid walls and palaces, and he called it El-Kahera—that is, the 'Victorious.' Proudly, victoriously, beside the old city of Fostal, arose the new city of El-Kahera, the wondrous city! Moëz sat enthroned there in the midst of his realm, and he founded in El-Kahera, the Victorious, the dynasty of the Fatimite caliphs; for Fatima, the daughter of the prophet Mohammed, had married Ali, who was the head of the house from which Moëz and Jauhar descended.

"The new city, El-Kahera arose quickly, and soon became the model for all that was beautiful in the arts and sciences in Egypt. The haughty Bagdad, once so mighty, sank into the dust before her.

"But the Fatimites were neither wiser nor more fortunate than the Abbassites, of whom I told you yesterday, had been. The people could not love them, for the Fatimites ruled tyranically, and knew nothing of pity and love; and the religion of the prophet, which teaches that we should love and do good to our fellow-men, they practised with their tongues only, but not in reality. They thought it sufficient to be able to call themselves descendants of the great prophet, without imitating him in his good works.

"At last one of them even dared to proclaim himself the prophet. His name was Hakem. To him it did not seem enough to be the descendant of Mohammed, of our great prophet—he wished to be king and prophet himself. He desired to found a new religion, and, because the inhabitants of El-Kahera would not bow down before him in the dust, and abandon their prophet, Mohammed, for his sake, he caused the one half of the beautiful city of El-Kahera, the Victorious, to be laid in ashes, and he allowed his wild hordes to plunder and rob the other half. He rejoiced in this, and imagined Allah would be contented. He said, too, that Allah conversed with him each day, and gave him instructions with his own lips. It was for this purpose that he went daily into the mountains of Mokatan, which rise on the banks of the Nile, near the city; and there he, a second Moses, communed, as he declared, with Allah.

"But one day he did not return from the mountains, and when his janizaries sought him they found him lying dead on the ground, pierced with daggers.

"The Fatimites had ruled over Egypt for two hundred years. Their glory was now at an end, and Allah sent the unbelievers as a scourge to punish those who had dared to set themselves above the prophet, to punish the sons of Hakem who had declared himself to be the prophet.

"The unbelievers, who called themselves Christians, came, therefore, with a cross on their arms, and a cross on their banners, conquered El-Kahera, and levied a tribute of many millions of piasters. But the Caliph Addad, a son of Hakem, called to his assistance Noureddin, the ruler of the land of Alep, who sent him a powerful army, and the army of the Christian dogs was scattered like dust before the winds.

"Yet Addad reaped no blessing from the assistance thus called to his side—the son was to be punished for the misdeeds and tyranny of his father Hakem. A strong and mighty man had come with Noureddin's army; he made himself Addad's vizier, their commander-in-chief, and Addad died of mortification. Saladin the son of Ayoub, assumed his place, and became the ruler of Egypt, and founded the dynasty of the Ayoubites."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MAMELUKES.

THE scha-er paused a moment, and directed a glance of his wild black eyes at the audience surrounding him. The men regarded him with profound gravity, and nodded their heads in approval, and requested him to proceed.

Rejoicing at his success, he continued in a loud voice: "But the rule of the Ayoubites did not last long; it was even more brief than that of the Fatimites.

"The reign of the ten sultans distinguished the short and glorious history of their house, which, above all, loved show and splendor. The palaces of these proud rulers of El-Kahera were crowded with servants and slaves.

"It was at this time that the Mogul, Genghis Khan, assembled all the Tartar hordes of his land under his banner. They followed him to the banks of the Tigris, and nothing but terror and desolation, ashes and bones, were found where they had passed. Burning and destroying, they marched to the banks of the Caspian Sea. Lamentations followed, and numberless corpses encumbered the track of his army. At last, weary of their bloody work, the Mongols stopped to rest in beautiful Circassia.

"Here they purchased slaves for their masters. One Ayoubite alone purchased twelve thousand young men: with them he repaired to Asia Minor, where he dressed them in rich, glittering garments, and called them his Mamelukes, that is, 'those he had acquired and paid for.' And now, listen, ye men of Cavalla, in this manner there arose in history a new tribe, a new race, and it gave itself the name of Mamelukes. Even the sultan formed for his service a corps out of their race; they became mighty and valiant, increased from generation to generation, and before them rulers trembled. Yes, even the Sultan at Stamboul feared their might.

"The Mamelukes, however, dethroned the last Ayoubite, the one who had purchased them. The Mamelukes vanquished all the Christian dogs who came to the holy land to fight for what they call the holy grave. They murdered the last sultan. They then placed on the throne one of their own race, a Mameluke. And observe, ye men of Cavalla, with this begins a new era in the history of this land: the Mamelukes mount the throne, and make themselves masters of Egypt.

"But upon this fearful deed, follow disorder, revolt, terror, blood, and death! I could tell you much more of the atrocities done by the Mamelukes, unheard of as yet by any of you, and such as the history of no other land can exhibit. I could relate to you the histories of all the other nations of the world, but if ye listened, ye men of Cavalla, to the history of the Mamelukes of the last century, the events of all the other lands of the world would sound to you, compared with the deeds that have been done in the land of the Egyptians since the year 620, after the birth of the great prophet Mohammed, like nursery-tales. On the grave of the prophet sat, her features shrouded in a bloody veil, the holy spirit of the history of the world, sadly recording the atrocious deeds of the cruel, implacable forty-seven tyrants who reigned on the bloody throne of El-Kahera during two hundred and sixty-three years. Seventeen of them were murdered, and eighteen of their successors dethroned. The rule of each lasting but a few moons. The tyrant was always hurled down by the tyrant.

"One would have supposed that the Mamelukes would have shown more love and reverence for the princes of their own race than for foreign rulers, but the reverse was the case. The Mamelukes believed that they were under no obligation to respect a prince of their own race more than themselves. They raised their hands threateningly against every one who dared to consider himself something better than they. They considered themselves the advisers of the princes of their own race, and without their approval, these princes could undertake nothing whatever. And worse than this ambition, were the machinations and plundering of the intriguing men who surrounded the throne of the Mamelukes. Even Allah's wrath was aroused by this corruption, and the prophet grew angry. Allah punished them for their horrid deeds, and sent down famine, pestilence, and misery, upon the degraded land. The people lay in dust and ashes. In their despair they wrung their hands, and implored Allah to rescue them from this misery and torment.

"At last, after two and a half centuries, Allah sent them relief through the Ottomans.

"They could not be worse than the Mamelukes; for nothing on earth could be worse; the dagger was the only law of these slaves, who called nothing their own, and had neither family ties, fatherland, nor religion.

"Had they not come from Circassia? Had they not been purchased as slaves and brought to Egypt? Had they not been Christians, and were they not of Christian descent? But they had been forced, the slaves, to assume the holy religion of Mohammed. The prophet, however, does not incline his ear to enforced service. He who does not willingly lay down his faith and fidelity upon the altar can expect no blessing from Allah. The Mamelukes learned little, except to read the Koran, to handle the sword, to ride, and to be pitiless against everybody. They also learned to flatter the master who had purchased them, to bow down in the dust before him, and to be nothing for him but a mere tool that has ho honor, no thought, and no sensibility of its own. When the Mamelukes were fully matured, had become expert in using their swords, and managing their steeds, and when their chins became covered with beard, the masters who had bought them made them freemen, and gave them the rank and title of a *kachef*, an officer who was to lead and command the others. The kachef was the lieutenant of those who had not become free. They gave him a salary, or made him a confidant or assistant. When he got thus far, had become free, and been made a kachef, a career of ambition, but also of intrigue, trickery, and treason, opened itself before him. His shrewdness was irresistible, his strong arm accomplished all things.

"The kachef did homage to his first master only, but, if the latter were dead, and the Mameluke had become a freeman, he could attain to the throne through blood and murder. All the vices, with their interminable train, had made their entrance into El-Kahera. The new ruler well understood how to acquire riches, power, and respect, by force, and from a kachef he made himself bey. From the proceeds of his booty he purchased a swarm of slaves, who were compelled to follow him. He was only a military power. The Mameluke princes measured his rank and influence by the number of followers in his train when he passed through the streets of Alexandria. There were kachefs who owned a thousand slaves, and beys who possessed two thousand. By this you can judge the wealth of these Mameluke beys, for each of these servants cost them two hundred *patras*. But this expense was the smallest. There were, besides, the women, the beautiful Arabian horses, the splendid weapons, the Damascene blades, the glittering jewels, the costly cashmere shawls : all this belonged to the household of a Mameluke bey. The means by which he acquired all this were robbery, trickery, blood, and murder. Whatever was bad and vicious, corrupt and shameful, this the Mameluke practised without fear or hesitation. His virtue was that intrepidity, that courage, that boldness, that recoils from nothing, from no danger, from no abyss ; that yields to nothing, and to which nothing is sacred. But the slaves willingly submitted to a brave master, and greeted him as a hero.

"They galloped through the streets on their proud steeds, despising those who walked. When drawn up before the enemy on their war-horses, they bore down upon them boldly, and scattered them to the winds. But if the enemy were able to resist the force of their first fierce attack, they turned their horses and galloped away in wild flight.

"Such was the state of things when two hundred years ago the Ottomans marched with large armies into Egypt, to combat and vanquish the haughty Mamelukes.

"And now the time selected by Allah to punish the insolent race of the Mamelukes and their rulers who were seated on the throne of Egypt had come.

"The nations one by one submitted to the rule of these sons of Mohammed. After protracted struggles they had established a united empire on the banks of the Bosporus, and had built the proud city of Stamboul. The son of Mohammed governed as an illustrious ruler, until at last the Christian dogs came and conquered the magnificent city, and took up their abode in the shining palaces built be the last emperors of the house of the Comnenes. In the city of Constantinople, as they have named our beautiful Stamboul, they resided. A glittering throne was erected there; but the green flag of the prophet no longer fluttered from the minarets of the mosque, which they called the 'Church of the holy Sophia.'

"When the great Selim I. heard of the deeds of the Mamelukes, his zeal and his love for the prophet impelled him to restore his holy kingdom, and he marched with a mighty army into Egypt, to punish the wicked who were in arms against the prophet. He marched through Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Syria, into Egypt. Terror and lamentation were in his train; before him nations bowed down in the dust. He advanced victoriously, made himself master of Aleppo, and marched on to storm the sacred El-Kahera, which they now call Cairo. The Mamelukes defended themselves long and desperately, until they at last succumbed to superior numbers.

"But tranquillity was not yet restored to Egypt; the Mameluke prince, Tournan Bey, stole into the city at midnight, and with his Mamelukes murdered the entire Turkish garrison. Filled with wrath the great Selim returned and laid siege to the city. It held out for thirteen days and nights, but after fierce struggles was at last compelled to yield. Selim punished them terribly; they were all made prisoners, and Tournan was hanged in the midst of the city. Selim entered the city as its conqueror and ruler.

"You will suppose that Egypt now at last became tranquil and that the Mamelukes bowed down submissively before the great sultan, before the green flag of the prophet that floated in triumph from the citadel. So it would have been, had not those Mamelukes who had survived the fearful slaughter done among their ranks, brooded on vengeance. But I tell you, so long as there shall be one Mameluke left in the world, so long will he do battle with his sword; he is not to be vanquished, unless indeed he be trodden under foot as a venomous serpent, and destroyed forever.

"The noble Selim had magnanimously omitted to do this. He allowed the Mamelukes to take the oath of fidelity, supposing they would keep it. He then made all Egypt a province of the Turkish Empire, and returned to the banks of the Bosporus. He came home, a victorious hero, covered with honor, and the whole empire received him with exultation, and peace and happiness returned with him to Stamboul. Over in Egypt, however, things were no longer looking so peaceful, although the noble Selim had been so generous to the Mamelukes that he had not only given them their lives, but also accorded them a portion of their former power. He had desired to have two powers in the government that should watch each other, and therefore the great and wise ruler ordered that twenty-four Mameluke officials should be appointed to share the government with his own Turkish officials. In the same manner as the sultan appoints a pacha, or governor, had the Mamelukes also appointed a chief. This chief was called Sheik-el-Belad, and his power was equal to that of the pacha. He had seven adjutants, the *odjaklis*, who commanded the seven corps of which the Mameluke army consisted. And, I say to you, the Mamelukes were more powerful in El-Kahera than are the pachas in Turkish cities. Their strifes and feuds were such, that those were among the unhappiest of Egypt's days.

"And now, hearken to the dreadful conclusion. I will narrate to you what has taken place in Egypt in this century. The Mamelukes overthrew the rule of the Turkish grand-sultan, under the leadership of the bloodthirsty Ali, the new bey who stood at the head of the Mamelukes. He drove out the sultan's pacha, and announced through him to Selim, 'that the Turkish rule was at an end, and that Egypt was again free, he having driven out the Turks with the edge of the sword.' And Egypt, the rebellious province, was for a time again free; that is to say, enslaved by the Mameluke Bey Ali, who attempted to extend his power further and further. He sought to form alliances even with the enemies of Selim, even with those who did not believe in the holy prophet. He even sought, with flattery and entreaties, to prevail on the grandees of the republic of Venice to furnish him with assistance against the aggressions of the Turks. He drew his sword and drove our armies even unto Mecca in Arabia, possessed himself of the holy city of Mecca, and even carried his boldness so far that he caused himself to be proclaimed Grand-Sultan of Arabia, and ruler of the two seas.

"Yet the eye of Allah beholds the unjust, and punishes the wicked ; and I will now give you the very latest intelligence I have received from the holy city. May it fill your heart and soul with joyous gratitude for the justice of Allah ! Yes, Allah punishes the insolent. And by the hand of his favorite, of Mohammed Abou-Dahab, in whom the Grand-Sultan Ali confided, was he laid low. This slave Mohammed murdered his master, and seated himself in his place. But him, too, did Allah punish as a wrong-doer and criminal. Allah punished the treason which Mohammed had practised on his master by afflicting him with madness. Day and night he beheld before him Ali's terrible bloody shade ; in horrible dreams he saw the countenance of his murdered master, and at last, amid fearful torments, he slew himself.

"Do you suppose peace had now at last come ? Do you suppose that Egypt now submitted to her rightful ruler, the Grand-Sultan of Stamboul ? Ye men of Cavalla, hardly was Egypt released from the tyrant Ali, when three other Mameluke beys advanced to seize the vacant throne.

"Mourad, Ibrahim, and Ismail, competed for the prize. Each of them aspired to be the ruler of Egypt—each of them aspired to be called Scheik-el-Belad.

"Mourad and Ibrahim united themselves to rule together in brotherly love. They united their forces against Ismail, and they prevailed against him—he was overthrown and murdered, extinguished like a light that has shone but a brief day.

"And now, hearken to the end, ye men of Cavalla. The Mameluke beys, Mourad and Ibrahim, have entered the golden city of El-Kahera, and have become great and mighty. They have conquered the grand-sultan, have possessed themselves of all the lands, brought all the Mamelukes into subjection, and have not rested until all Egypt has been subjugated.

"And now you know, men of Cavalla, that the sons of the slaves, that Mourad and Ibrahim, rule in the holy city El-Kahera, and in all Egypt. Proudly do these Mameluke princes hold up their heads. From slaves they have become heroes, and from heroes they have become princes."

CHAPTER VII.

DREAMS OF THE FUTURE.

In breathless attention, utterly oblivious of all else, Mohammed had listened to the words of the scha-er ; and long after he had concluded, and the audience begun to disperse, he still sat, his eyes widely extended, and gazing fixedly at the cushion on which the sha-er had sat, as though he were still there, relating the deeds and wonders of the Mamelukes. Suddenly the silence that surrounded him aroused him from his preoccupation. He arose and walked slowly out, still hearing the voice that related such wondrous stories of distant lands. Thoughtfully he wandered on toward the rocky pathway. He had forgotten all else : the mother on whose account he had been so anxious, the boys whom he was in the habit of regarding so contemptuously when he met them, and whom he now scarcely sees as they pass by ; the cave, too, his paradise, is forgotten. He would no longer desire to return to this dark, dreary solitude.

Upward, upward to the highest point of the rock, to which the name "The Ear of Bucephalus" had been given ! He climbs the rocky ascent like a gazelle. Thither no one will follow him ; there the eye of the prophet alone will see, and the ear of Allah alone hear him. Up there he will be alone with God and his dreams.

Now he is on the summit, gazing far out into the sea, into the infinite distance where heaven and sea unite and become one. He stretches out his arms and utters a cry of exultation that resounds through the mountains like the scream of the eagle :

"Thither will I, to the land of promise and of fortune!—to the land where slaves become heroes, and heroes princes! Mother, your dream shall be realized! There I shall find palaces on whose summit I shall stand with uplifted sword, nations at my feet. To Egypt will I go. To the land of grandeur and glory, where for thousands of years the greatest and mightiest have made of themselves princes and rulers. I will become mighty; I will cultivate my mind, that it may help me to rule men. Then I will make of myself a prince before whom all other princes shall fall in the dust!"

He shouts again exultingly, and the walls of the cliffs echo back his cry. He feels so happy, so free from all earthly care. He seems to float in upper air like the eagle, looking down upon the lowliness of earth beneath.

As he looks out into the distance, he sees a little dark spot rise on the horizon. His eagle-eye perceives that it is a ship. As it comes nearer, it dances on the waves, and its white sails expand like the wings of a giant swan. It is a beautiful, majestic object. The young Mohammed rejoices at the spectacle, and says, in low tones, to himself; "Some day I shall possess ships, too. Some day I shall tread the deck of the great admiral's ship."

The ship glides over the glittering mirror of the deep, and comes nearer and nearer, and the curious are now assembled on the shore to gaze at it; for rarely do vessels seek the rocky promontory of Bucephalus to land in the bay of Contessa. The peninsula is desolate and barren, and there is nothing here for merchant-ships but the tobacco for which this region is celebrated. A Turkish galleon comes semi-annually for the taxes which the governor has levied, to bring them to Stamboul to the coffers of the grand-sultan.

But the vessel now approaching is no Turkish galleon, but a magnificent ship; and one can see on the deck, under the gold-embroidered tent, a Turk reclining on cushions. Slaves in rich attire are on their knees before him, others are behind him fanning the flies away with fans made of peacock-feathers.

"Who can this great man, this stranger be?" ask the curious, who are standing on the beach, gazing fixedly at the ship that has now entered the little bay, and is steering toward the landing.

Mohammed has also hurried down to the beach. To-day, while his heart and mind are filled with the narrative of the scha-er, to-day every thing seems to him so strange, so wonderful; it seems to him that he is about to receive intelligence from the world his whole being longs for so intensely, the world that is one day to lie at his feet.

The ship has entered the bay, and a boat containing three Turkish gentlemen is coming from it to the shore. They haughtily step ashore, and pass by, without saluting the crowd, to the pathway that leads up to Cavalla. But the grand-looking Turk is still on deck, reclining on his cushions; the slaves are still about, filling and refilling his long chibouque, on whose golden mouth-piece brilliants are seen glittering.

Mohammed's keen eyes observe all this, and he follows each movement of the aristocratic Turk with breathless attention. Thus, he thinks, will he also do some day; thus will he, too, recline on his silken cushions, surrounded by his slaves—he, the prince!

How would those who were standing around the boy have laughed if they could have divined Mohammed's thoughts, if they had known that he was dreaming of his future magnificence while standing there on the beach in his wide cotton pants, tied at the bottom around his ankles with strings, his feet thrust into a pair of peaked shoes of doubtful color, a faded red shawl bound around his waist, on his body a well-worn brown shirt, the whole crowned with the red *tarbush* that covered his dark hair, around which was wound a white and not particularly clean *kuffei*!

Who could have imagined that this poor Turkish child was dreaming of future glory, and saying to himself, as he regarded the grand gentleman on the deck of the ship: "I will one day be as you are, and even greater than you!"

The governor, accompanied by the strange Turks, and followed by servants carrying palanquins, was now observed coming down the pathway from Cavalla. Hastily he walks to the beach, and, with the Turks, enters the boat and steers for the ship.

The governor has now reached the ship and climbed to the deck, but the grand gentleman does not stir from his cushions, and only greets him with a gracious nod. The people on the beach observe this with astonishment, and ask each other: "Who can this be? Tschorbadji Hassan is the greatest man on our peninsula, and every head bows down before him. And this gentleman dares to salute him with a mere nod. Truly he must be a very great man!"

Mohammed regards the people who are speaking contemptuously, and murmurs to himself: "I shall be a greater man some day. He is no prince, else his ship would show the admiral's flag, and the governor would fall on his face before him. The scha-er told me that such is the custom in the presence of princes. But the people shall one day prostrate themselves on their faces before me!"

At last the grand gentleman arises slowly from his cushions, and lays his arm on the shoulder of the governor, who walks at his side, his head bowed down, and seemingly delighted at being permitted to bear this burden on his shoulder.

They walk to the stairway; the governor busies himself in helping the stranger to descend, jumps into the boat, and extends his hand to assist him to enter. He tranquilly receives these attentions; the slaves follow, and lay gold-embroidered cushions on the bottom of the boat, and the grand gentleman reclines on them in an easy attitude. The governor stands before him, addressing him with an air of profound reverence, and the slaves take up their position behind him, and waft refreshing breezes to him with their fans. As the boat reaches the beach, the governor turns and addresses the people in imperious tones:

"Bow down in the dust before the grand-vizier—before Cousrouf Pacha! Salute his excellency!"

All fall on their knees, and remain there in mute reverence, while the pacha, accompanied by the governor, and followed by his slaves, ascends the pathway to Cavalla.

One person only had not fallen down on his knees, and that person was Mohammed Ali.

He had secreted himself behind a rock, and there he stands, regarding the pacha with eager eyes, and glancing contemptuously at those who, at other times so noisy and arrogant, are now bowed down in the dust, and who have as yet not even ventured to raise their heads.

But now the scene on the shore becomes an animated one. The governor has ordered that other boats be sent out to the ship, and a peculiar and wondrous sight presents itself on board.

White female figures, closely enveloped in long white veils, appear on deck. Tall men, with black faces and fat bodies, stand at their side. The sailors have disappeared from the deck; no one is now visible but the white female figures and the fat black men.

"That is the harem of the grand-vizier," the people now whisper to each other, "and those men at their side are the eunuchs."

Two of these eunuchs now come to the shore, and, in threatening tones, order the men to leave the beach at once, and to go up to Cavalla to announce there that no one shall allow himself to be seen in the streets.

The men hurriedly ascend the pathway to the city, without even venturing to look back at the pacha's harem.

Mohammed Ali alone is nowhere to be seen. He has crouched down behind the rocks, and no one sees the fiery eyes that peer out cautiously from his hiding-place.

The women, looking like white swans, are now rowed to the shore.

The beach is bare—no one sees them. They can venture to open their veils a little, and look about them on this strange shore.

Oh! what glowing eyes, what purple lips, are disclosed to the boy's sight! For the first time, his heart beats stormily; for the first time, he feels a strange delight in his soul. Yes—beautiful are these women, as are the houris in paradise, and enviable is he to whom they belong.

Two of the eunuchs walk before the women, four walk beside them, and imperiously command them to draw their veils closer together. They approach several of them with profound respect, and extend their hands to assist them in entering the palanquins that stand ready to receive them; the others must go on foot.

Loudly resounds the cry of the eunuchs who walk in advance: "The harem—the harem of his excellency! Away, ye men! The harem!"

At this cry all flee to their houses in the city above, and none are to be seen in the deserted streets but the ladies of the harem that are being borne along in palanquins, and the train of veiled figures behind them.

The procession moves on to the governor's house, where a strange scene presents itself. Servants are standing about in gold-embroidered garments; all is confusion and motion. His excellency the pacha condescends to take up his abode in the governor's palace, and the upper saloons are being opened and prepared for the distinguished guest. Adjoining the main building, a side building, with barred windows, extends far out into the garden. Until now it had stood empty, for the governor cares not for the society of women; his heart is cold toward them; he loves nothing but his son. The harem is empty, and is therefore ready to receive the women and slaves of his excellency Cousrouf Pacha. The shutters of the windows have long stood open—the eunuchs now come forward and fasten them securely. The vast building has now become quite still.

Mohammed had watched the procession until the last white swan had disappeared upon the plateau above. He now slipped out of his hiding-place, and walked down to the beach to look at the ship. He had not observed that other boats had put off from the ship to land more passengers.

"I should like to know the destination of this proud and beautiful ship. I should like to sail with it," murmured the boy.

"Then do so!" cried a loud voice behind him. "If you wish to, my lad, come with us. One leads a splendid life on such a ship. You are tall and strong, and will be gladly accepted."

His countenance beaming with joy, Mohammed turned and saw at his side a boy of slender figure, in simple Turkish garments, but his hair was closely cut, and not covered with the fez and kuffei. Mohammed glanced fiercely at the boy.

"You are a slave!" said he.

The boy nodded and laughed.

"I am a slave. But I don't expect to remain one long; I have already heard that the *capitano* intends to sell me over there, and there one can make his fortune, that I know!"

"Over there?" said Mohammed, eagerly. "What do you call over there?"

"Well, the place we are going to!" exclaimed the boy, laughing. "To Egypt we go, carrying rich goods, and I myself, so to speak, am a piece of goods for the capitano."

"You go to Egypt?" asked Mohammed; "to the land of wonders, where slaves become heroes, and heroes princes?"

"Ah! you have heard it spoken of, too!" said the boy, laughing. "Yes, the scha ers everywhere have something to relate about Egypt. In Stamboul I have often heard them tell of the Mamelukes, too!"

"Of the Mamelukes? Of them, too, you have heard?"

"I have not only heard of them, but I intend to make a Mameluke of myself. As you know, these Mamelukes are the slaves of the beys in Egypt. I hope to have the good fortune to be purchased by a bey. I know all that is necessary to become the servant of a Mameluke."

"And what is necessary?" asked Mohammed, eagerly. "What is it that you know?"

"I can ride as well as the best of the horsemen of the grand-vizier. On a bare horse I can fly over the plains with the speed of a bird. I know how to handle the sword and the spear, and in the fastest gallop I can sever the head of a horse from his body. These are arts that are useful over there, and in them I am a master. You may look at me in astonishment if you will! I am not as tall and stout as you are, but I can tell you I have the strength of a giant, and, in spite of my fourteen years, I am a man. I expect to make my fortune in Egypt."

"And where have you been until now? From what place do you come?"

"I have been a slave from my youth; I was well brought up and had an education ; I know how to wait on fine gentlemen. I served a nobleman as first valet for three years, but couldn't stand the dull, effeminate life. I longed to be out in the world, and committed all sorts of freaks in order that my master might drive me off. To be sure, I received the bastinado daily, but I stood it like a man. I determined to continue to annoy my gracious master until he should sell me. Look at my feet ! "

He took off his shoes and showed Mohammed the scarred soles of his feet.

"These are the scars with which I have purchased my future. Yes ; but why do you look at me in such astonishment ? By Allah ! I should not like to live on this rock here, like you ! I must out into the world ; must go to Egypt, and make something great of myself."

"But how will you begin it ?" asked Mohammed. "I should like to do so, too."

"I don't know yet," replied the boy, carelessly ; "it will depend upon how I succeed in recommending myself to a bey with my horsemanship and sword. One thing I can tell you, if I once become a Mameluke, I shall rise. In case you should hear of me some day, in case my celebrity should reach even this desolate rock, I will tell you my name. My name is Osman, and in mockery, because I served a nobleman, they added bey to it. But I tell you, I will make of the name given me in derision a real title ! If you hear of me some day, I shall be called Osman Bey in earnest."

"I will tell you my name, too," said Mohammed, proudly, "and if you ever hear of me, you shall know that you once met me here upon the beach. My name is Mohammed Ali, and I am Ibrahim Aga's son. I am a freeman, you must know, and have never bowed my head beneath the yoke of another ! Remember my name, little Osman, and, if Allah wills it, you shall hear of me some day. My name is Mohammed Ali."

He nodded to the boy contemptuously, and walked off.

Osman laughed, and cried after him :

"You will probably hear of me first, you bold boy, you beggar-prince ! I shall probably never hear of the beggar-prince, Mohammed Ali, son of Ibrahim Aga, but of me you shall hear, you silly lad! Don't forget my name: I am called Osman Bey."

If they both could now have known the future! If a prophet had permitted the two boys who met here for the first time, in order that they might angrily impress their names on each other's memory, to look into the future, what would they have seen in its mirror?

Two heroes opposed to each other in ardent love, and in wild enmity. Both equally great, equally ambitious, and equally greedy of glory. They would have seen blood flowing in streams for their sake. They would have seen how Osman Bey, called by the name of Bardissi, dashed onward, flourishing his cimeter at the head of thousands of devoted followers. They would have seen Mohammed Ali in a glittering uniform, mounted on his proud steed, at the head of thousands charg- with uplifted sword against Bardissi.

Here on a rock in the bay of San Marmora, the boys met for the first time, and instinct permitted them to feel the enmity that existed between them throughout their entire lives, and which caused thousands to fall, and blood to flow in streams.

They know nothing of this now. Osman whistles a merry air and jumps into the boat that bears him back to the ship. Mohammed Ali ascends the rock to a quiet and solitary spot. There he will rest and meditate on what he has seen and heard to-day.

The ship sails out to sea. Like a giant swan, proudly, majestically, it glides over the blue waves, until at last it rises up in the distance with its masts and spars against the horizon, faintly, like a mere vision of the air.

Above, on the Ear of Bucephalus, stands Mohammed Ali, leaning on his gun, his eyes fixed on the ship. He sighs profoundly as it now disappears without leaving the slightest trace behind, as though engulfed by the waters.

"Gone," he murmured—"gone! What was the name of the boy, the slave who so defiantly charged me to remember his name? I remember, it was Osman. Yes, Osman Bey, he said. Well, he may depend upon it I shall remember his name, and he may also count on remembering that my name is Mohammed Ali, if we should ever meet again. Oh, I envy him," said he, in low tones, looking longingly at the horizon. "Oh, I would so gladly have gone with him to the wondrous land the scha-er told of, where slaves become heroes, and heroes princes. He, the slave, goes thither; and I, who am free, am bound to this rock by my poor mother, and must remain!"

The ship sailed on farther and farther on the bright waves. It glided onward over the deep-blue sea two days longer; on the third day the sailors shouted with joy, for the water had become green, and this announced to the experienced seamen that they should soon see land.

When the waves of the Mediterranean Sea change from blue to green, the yellow coast of Africa is near. Another day passed, and the ship entered the harbor of Alexandria. The black and brown people came out to the ship, howling and yelling in their little boats, and with them came the slave-dealers to look for human wares, to bargain for the living as well as for the dead freight.

The captain shows the slave-dealers his fine piece of goods, the boy Osman Bey, and offers him as a good article of merchandise. "He is a splendid servant, and knows how to color the chibouque, and how to wait on his master with soft words."

"He knows more than that!" exclaimed the boy Osman Bey, indignantly. "He knows how to scour across the desert on his steed without saddle or bridle, and loves to flourish the cimeter and lay the heads of men and animals at his feet with a single blow."

The slave-dealer regards him with favorable glances. That is what he needs. The great Mameluke prince Mourad needs many servants and warriors, and he gave the dealer authority to purchase men for him, young, strong, and healthy men. The ranks of his Mamelukes need recruiting. He will make a fine Mameluke, this slender young man with the keen, glittering eyes.

"What will you have for the boy?"

The captain shrugged his shoulders. "He is really beyond all price; for, as I tell you, he is a splendid servant, and, as he tells you himself, he is a fine horseman, and knows how to wield the cimeter. He is priceless, and I hardly think we shall come to terms."

They now began to bargain for this human merchandise. They made a great deal of noise, quarrelled, and shook their fists in each other's faces, while young Osman Bey stood at their side, his arms folded on his breast, calmly looking on and smiling at the uproar created on his account. At last they came to terms. The dealer received his living goods, young Osman Bey, and paid the captain the price agreed upon.

If young Mohammed Ali could see this: if his dark brown eye could send a glance with the speed of an arrow across the waves and through the days and nights; and if he could hear how the slave, Osman Bey, is traded off for sugar and coffee; if he could see Osman standing in the slave market awaiting a purchaser; if he could see Mourad, the Mameluke bey, at last approach, smile approvingly on young Osman, and finally purchase and place him among his followers; if he could have seen this and the future, he would have felt proud and happy in being a free man, although a poor one. His hands are not fettered, he serves no master, and he cannot be bargained for and sold like a bale of goods! He is a free human being, conscious of his own worth, and also conscious of the great future that awaits him.

He is thinking of it now as he stands on the rock leaning on his gun, and staring out into the air after the vanished ship. He does not see the future; he only dreams of it as he looks out into the vacant air, oblivious of the present. Nor does he see the mother, who, while he stands there, is hastening painfully and breathlessly, her head bowed down, from her humble hut to the proud, main street of the city, to the store of the merchant Lion.

The merchant saw her coming, met her at the door, and held out his hand to her.

"Is it you, Sitta Khadra?" he cried, as she reached the door. "I must tell you I have expected you, esteemed lady, light of my eyes!"

She tottered into the hall and seated herself in the chair which the merchant had hastened to bring her.

"Why these fine phrases, sir? Talk to me in short and terse language, as you Franks are accustomed to do, and pay no attention to the flowery words which, with us, the men are inthe habit of mocking instead of flattering us poor creatures."

"I am not mocking you, Sitta Khadra," said the merchant, gravely. "I esteem you, for you are a good woman, and therefore I addressed you as I did. I know you well, and I know what you have there hidden under your veil."

"What have I there, sir?"

"You have brought me back the gold-embroidered goods, and the veil bordered with golden fringe, which your son Mohammed bought for you."

"Yes, sir; I have brought them back. They do not become me. I did not like to tell the boy so, for it pleases him to think I will array myself in them. I therefore accepted them, hoping you would take them back."

"I expected you, and see, I have the money ready for you. When I saw you coming, I took it quickly from my purse. Here, good Sitta Khadra, are the six ducats which Mohammed gave me."

She shook her head gently.

"You are very kind, sir, and I thank you. Yet, I cannot accept them. Mohammed would scold me when he learned it. He told me, himself, that he had given you four ducats and not six. I divined that you had given him the goods at a cheaper price, and that he could not have paid for them at their real value. By this I perceived that the sale was only a pretended one, and have hoped you would take back the goods. But the money I will not receive."

"To whom shall I give it, then?" asked the astonished merchant. "I dare not offer it to Mohammed; I believe it would make him so angry that he would raise his hand against me. You must not tell him, Sitta Khadra, that you have brought me back the goods."

"You are right, sir; I should not like to cause him this unhappiness. I shall tell him I have taken the goods to the tailor to have it made into a dress by the next Bairam's festival. But when the festival comes, I shall no longer be here, and he will not see that I have not put on the costly dress."

"You will not be here, Sitta Khadra? Then where will you be?" asked the merchant.

She slowly raised her arm, and pointed upward.

"Up there, sir, with my beloved master, Ibrahim Aga; I shall see the glory of Allah, and shall see the prophet, the great prophet to whom my heart-felt prayers so often ascend."

"What is it you are saying, good Sitta? At the next Bairam's festival, you will surely still be with us on earth."

She slowly shook her head.

"I am dying, sir! I have been dying for the last two days: look at my lips."

"They are red and fresh, and show that you are in health, Sitta Khadra."

"Yes, my lips are red, because I have colored them with henna, that Mohammed may not see how pale they are. For him I have colored my cheeks, too. Good sir, one may deceive out of love, and Allah will forgive me for having made my face a lie out of love for my son. I tell you I am dying; therefore have I come to bring you the goods, and to beg you to take the money and keep it. When he is in want give it to him, and tell him Mother Khadra sends it with her best blessing, and that he must accept it as a present from me, and make a good use of it. I know, sir, that you will give it to him, and that you will watch over him that you may know when he needs it.

"And one thing more I beg of you, whenever you see my beloved son, say to him: 'Mohammed Ali, your mother Khadra, loved you very dearly, and sends you a greeting from Heaven, through me. She dwells, above with your father, Ibrahim Aga, and both are looking down upon you, and observing your actions. Therefore be thoughtful, Mohammed, to walk pure and free in the sight of Allah and your parents.' Promise me, that you will often say this to my son."

"I promise, Sitta Khadra," said the merchant, solemnly. "I promise you that I will watch over your dear son, and that, if it is in my power, I will at all times be ready to lend him a helping hand. I give you my hand to seal this promise, Sitta Khadra."

She took his hand, and the merchant knew by the heat of her thin, wan fingers that a burning fever was in her blood, and that Death had kissed her lips.

"Now all is well," said she, as she rose to her feet with a painful effort. "Now I will return home, that my darling, my Mohammed, may find me when he comes. I have but a few more days to live, and I would not lose a moment that I can spend with him. Farewell! Allah be with you!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FRIENDS.

In the house of the governor every thing was changed since the day on which the grand-vizier had taken up his abode in the upper saloons. Young Osman, the son of the tschorbadji, experienced this change with great displeasure.

Since the stranger's harem had been installed in the side-building, whose windows open on the garden, the governor's son can no longer walk freely in all parts of the beautiful park and enjoy its solitude without fear of interruption. By far the greater portion of the park has been set apart for the use of the harem, and only a small portion adjoining the court-yard is reserved for him.

"And yet fresh air and the sunshine are my only enjoyments." said he, complainingly, to Mohammed Ali, who had come the next day, according to promise, to repeat to young Osman what the scha-er had spoken, to narrate to him the wondrous stories of the Mamelukes.

He lay reclining on a mat in front of young Osman's couch, and in excited words, with glowing eyes, he told the heroic stories of the proudest people of Egypt.

Osman's large eyes were fixed on his face in an earnest gaze, and a slight color tinged his pale cheeks as he listened.

"Beautiful, is it not?" asked Mohammed, as he finished his narrative. "Would not you, too, like to go to the land where, as the scha-er says, slaves become heroes, and heroes princes?"

Osman shook his head gently.

"I do not know, Mohammed. I should be contented, I think, to remain here, reclining on my cushions, the sun above me, and you at my side."

"But what I have related is beautiful, is it not?"

"I do not know," replied Osman, for the second time. "I regarded you while you were speaking, and I rejoiced in you. It seems to me, Mohammed, as though you were the better part of myself. I feel as you feel, and think as you think, and rejoice when I hear you utter in fresh and glowing words that which my lips can utter with timidity and hesitation only. If I were healthy, Mohammed, I should be, I think, as you are. Therefore, whenever I look at you, it seems to me I see myself as I might be, but am not."

"You will be yourself, again," said Mohammed, tenderly. "When you have become strong again, no one will be able to compete with you in manly exercises, and like all the other boys I shall have to bow my head humbly before you, and shall have to pay you the tribute as they pay it to me."

In reply, Osman merely raised his pale, transparent hand and showed it to Mohammed.

"Look at this pale, colorless hand. A poor, withered flower, good for nothing except to press the hand of a friend, but a hand that can never wield the sword or battle with the unruly waves as yours can. No, Mohammed! I shall perhaps have health enough to live like the flower or the blade of grass, but not to live like the eagle, like the steed, like Mohammed Ali! But I will not complain. I am contented; every one has his portion of happiness on earth; mine is, to lie on the purple in the sunshine, and to hear my Mohammed tell stories. But I entreat you to come very often," he continued, with a sigh. "They have now curtailed my little earthly happiness; since this Turk has come with his harem and his glittering suite, I am very miserable. I know that my father feels it, too, and often wishes his distinguished guest had taken his departure."

"Will he remain long, Osman?"

"That depends on whether his sun shines again in Stamboul," said young Osman, shrugging his shoulders. "I must tell you, Mohammed, there are peculiar circumstances connected with this gentleman. He has fallen into disfavor, and is waiting here to see whether his sun will shine again or not. He has been sent into exile, and it was really intended that he should go to Egypt, where the Mamelukes of whom you have just been relating such heroic stories, have again risen in wild insurrection against the Turkish governor, and Cousrouf Pacha is lying in wait here because he has good friends in Stamboul who are working for him, and because he hopes to be able to return to the beautiful capital where he can revel in luxury ; whereas, if he should go to Egypt, he would be compelled to draw the sword and march out to bloody battle."

"I hate him—the coward!" exclaimed Mohammed. "I despise men who prefer eating sugar with women in the harem, to mounting their steeds and taking the field against the enemy, sword in hand."

"That will never be your preference," said Osman, regarding him tenderly.

"No, never," protested the boy. "Women are good playthings for hours of leisure, when a man has nothing better to do. But to revel, like Cousrouf, in luxury—to hide himself while he might be attempting deeds of heroism—to be dallying with women instead of mowing off the heads of his enemies, that I cannot comprehend. It is repulsive to me to think of a man's surrounding himself with women, and taking delight in their caresses and soft words."

"It suits Cousrouf very well!" said Osman, smiling. "He spends the greater part of his time in the harem. Singing, music, and rejoicing, are the order of the day there. Black female slaves fan him with fans made of peacock-feathers; others, on their knees, fill his chibouque, while he reclines on his cushions, smoking and dreamily gazing at the beautifully-attired female slaves who dance before him."

"And he," said Mohammed, "he, the vain man, imagines that they dance and remain in his harem out of love for him!"

"I suppose they make him think so. They say a woman's lips make a lie sweet, and that her face always wears a mask!

And yet," he continued, looking dreamily toward the harem, "I must tell you, Mohammed, I sometimes think I should be happy, too, and less tormented with *ennui*, if one of these houris of paradise sat at my side, chastely veiled, regarding me lovingly and I could look through the white veil at the smile on her lips. Ah, Mohammed, we, who are not made to become heroes, feel an irresistible longing after love, and the sweet delight of being loved. You, of course, cannot understand this."

"No, I cannot," cried Mohammed, with a contemptuous smile. "I shall never bow my head beneath the yoke of female slaves, with their beautiful almond-shaped eyes and purple lips. I shall consider all women as playthings, with the exception of my mother," said he, bowing his head with profound reverence. "Allah forgive me for speaking ill of women, for our mothers are women, Osman! Forgive me my pride and folly. I speak only of the light-footed slaves, with the deceiving smile and the false eyes."

"And who knows,' said Osman, smiling, "but that my Mohammed, who speaks of these fetters so derisively, may not some day be vanquished? Do not set your face against it, Mohammed. Remember that even the heart of the great prophet glowed with love, and that it was he who peopled paradise with houris, and promised it, as the highest bliss, that beautiful women should there kneel down before the blessed spirits, gently stroke their feet, and look at them lovingly with their lustrous, gazelle-like eyes. Therefore, do not say, Mohammed, that your heart shall never be accessible to love! Yours is a true, manly heart, and a manly heart must love. You see, Mohammed, I am hardly a man, and shall probably never become one, and therefore I do not believe that love will ever hold me in its golden net; I shall love nothing but my best, my only friend."

"And will you tell me his name, Osman?" asked Mohammed, bending down closely to him. Passionately, almost threateningly, he repeated: "Will you tell me the name of this, your beloved, your only friend?"

Osman, smiled, took from a cushion an oval mirror, framed in mother-of-pearl, with a golden handle, and held it before Mohammed. "Look at yourself, and you will know his name."

Looking, not at the mirror, but earnestly into his friend's eyes, Mohammed stooped down and kissed Osman's lips.

"Listen, Osman, to what I say! I am almost ashamed to confess it, and yet it is true, next to my mother I love you best on earth, and I believe I could sacrifice my life for you."

"And I mine for you," said Osman, gently.

"Let us swear to be true friends forever," continued Mohammed. "Here is my hand! Eternal friendship! If you need me, Osman, call me, and, were I ever so distant, I would come to you. When in want, or when cast down by sorrow and suffering, I will complain to no one but you. What my lips will confess to no one else, they shall confess to Osman. Shall it be so? Friendship for life?"

"Yes, life-long friendship!" said Osman. "Men need not know it. We will preserve as our secret the bond of friendship we have formed, and I only entreat of Allah that he may some day permit me to prove to you that I am your friend."

"And this I entreat of Allah, too," said Mohammed, warmly pressing his friend's wan hand. "But now let me go; the scha-er relates again to-day, and I will go and hear him, and come to-morrow to repeat to you what I have heard, if you wish it."

"I shall await you, Mohammed, and count the hours until you come."

They shook hands once more, and Mohammed hurried off down the garden-walks. Osman's eyes followed him lovingly.

"I love him, and may Allah enable me to prove it some day!"

Mohammed hurries on, heedless of the direction he has taken, and forgetting that the use of the main avenue was forbidden since the harem had taken possession of the park. He walks on, carelessly, heedlessly. He wishes to pass out at the back gate of the garden, as he often did. Hastening on, with flushed cheeks, he hardly perceives a veiled figure, accompanied by two eunuchs, that has just stepped out into the walk from a side-path. The eunuchs cry out, and imperiously command him to depart instantly. Mohammed stands still, shrugs his shoulders, and regards them derisively.

"Are you the masters here in the park of the tschorbadji of Cavalla?" he asks, proudly. "I shall depart when I choose, and because I choose, and not because the strange servants of the stranger have the insolence to order me to do so."

He said this in haughty, angry tones, and with sparkling eyes, inclined his head slightly to the veiled female figure, and passed slowly by her without even a curious glance.

But she stands still, and her black eyes burn like flames as her gaze follows him, and her purple lips murmur, in low tones: "Beautiful is he, as the young day; beautiful as the rosy dawn of heaven! Oh, that it shone over me! Oh, that this sun were mine!"

He heeded her not; he did not hear the sweet whispering of her lips.

CHAPTER IX.

A SOUL IN THE AGONIES OF DEATH.

THE narratives of the scha-er continued to resound in Mohammed's soul, and occupied him day and night. His existence seemed useless and empty, and every thing that surrounded him colorless and desolate. What cared he now for cliffs and caves, for the surging sea, for the blue sky? How little it seemed to him to be the best rifleman and oarsman of the island, to be renowned down in Praousta as the best fisherman!

What does he care for all this? Who hears of what takes place in Cavalla, or in the miserable village of Praousta? Nobody comes here except the merchants who sometimes land to purchase the celebrated tobacco, and the sultan's collectors who come twice a year for the taxes.

Who knows of these insignificant places? Who observes Mohammed Ali when he strikes the bird in its flight, or steers his boat over the waves in the wildest storm? All is tame and paltry! With his mind's eye he sees before him the cities the scha-er had told of. Over there in Egypt, stretched out on the yellow shore of the green sea, lies a great and magnificent city with towers, minarets, and temples, a city such as he has never seen, the city of Alexandria. Before this city, in the spacious harbor that has existed for thousands of years, lie long rows of ships with masts, and fluttering flags, and golden images at their bows.

Little boats dance about the ship, and all is activity and bustle. In the interior of the land shines El-Kahera, the new city, with the palaces of the caliphs and its hundreds of minarets and temples. The streets are alive with men of all nations; there are Turks and Arabians, Egyptians and Europeans. The blacks of Nubia and Abyssinia mingle with the white men of France and Germany, and the languages of all nations are heard.

He lay on the rock, on the Ear of Bucephalus, gazing out into the distance toward the horizon, imagining he could see these wondrous cities. He dreamed of the glories of the world, and his fancy beheld boats and ships, palaces and minarets.

The sea lies beneath like a blue mirror. The waves murmur in low tones as they caress the shore. The stillness is profound, the solitude of the first day of creation surrounds him. Suddenly a cry resounds, a loud, piercing one, such as the eagle utters when his young are in danger. It aroused Mohammed from his meditation.

"Strange! I heard the cry, yet I can nowhere see the eagle that uttered it."

For the second time it resounds, louder and more piercing than before. Mohammed shudders in his whole being.

The cry is not that of an eagle. It is a human voice. Toussoun has uttered it, and it announces that his mother is in danger. He springs with horror to his feet, and bounds from rock to rock, down the steep—he has just heard the cry for the third time.

"Await me, mother! O my mother, I am coming!"

Like an arrow he speeds through the suburb to his mother's hut. Pale and terrified, Toussoun meets him at the door. He had risen from his bed of sickness in response to Khadra's call. With weak, trembling lips he had entreated her to allow him to call her son, and he did call him, breathing out his last remnant of strength in summoning Mohammed to his mother. Pale, weak, and ill, he now returns to his own hut, supported on the arm of a neighbor, and returns to die.

Mohammed has not noticed him. He springs to the door, tears it open, and sees the women who have come to Sitta Khadra's assistance. Now that he has come they walk out noiselessly, and wait at the door.

How long will it be before she is dead, before they can assume the *rôle* of mourning-women, and begin their lamentations? True, Sitta Khadra is poor, but then the community will, out of self-respect, pay the mourning charges. Consoling themselves with this thought, the women crouch down at the door.

Mohammed kneels beside the mat on which his mother lies, takes her hands—now almost cold—in his own, bends over her and looks into the widely-distended eyes that stare vacantly up at him, and sobs in loud, heart-rending tones: "Mother, mother! Do you hear me? Here I am, your son, Mohammed. You cannot die, for I am with you!"

The words of her son reach the mother's soul, that was already on the point of fluttering to heaven. It returns to its poor frail habitation. Life returns to her eyes, and a faint smile plays about her pale lips. The mother heard her child's voice, and her soul returned to the already stiffening body.

With a faint smile she raised her head a little to kiss his lips.

"I recognize you, my son, and I awaken once more to bid you farewell."

"No, mother, it is impossible, you cannot leave me!" said he, in such loud and piercing tones that the mourning-women at the door heard it and whispered to each other: "That was a good cry; we could do no better ourselves."

"Son of my heart," whispered Khadra, and the mother employed her last strength to force her cold lips to speak and to recall the thoughts already struggling to take wing—"son of my Ibrahim, do not grieve for me! I have been dying these many days, I have long struggled with Death. He stood at the door ready to take me, but I thrust him back that I might see my son, my darling, once more."

"O mother, mother! you are breaking my heart," cried Mohammed, and his head sank heavily upon his mother's shoulder.

"Be brave, my son, I entreat you with my last breath! Be brave, be a man, and consider my dream with the eye of your soul. Make it reality! Make of the poor, disconsolate boy who stands here the hero of the future, as I saw you in my visions in the nights before you were born! I saw a crown on your head and a sword glittered in your hand. And I see the future now, too; and I will tell you what I see, my son: I see you, your son, and your grandson! They shall all wear crowns, shall sit on one throne, and the nations shall lie in the dust before them! My soul has returned to announce this to you."

"If your soul has returned," said he, in tones of earnest entreaty, "then command it to remain with you! Life will be solitary and desolate without you. You are the only woman I love. If you go, take me with you, and tell the prophet, if he be angry, that I could be of no use here on earth without you. Take me to my father and say to him, the family shall be united in heaven as it never was on earth."

"No, you shall not go with me," said she, raising herself with a last effort from the mat. "I command you to live! I shall go to your father and bear him the greeting of our only son, and say to him, 'We shall not die, we shall live on in our son; he will make our name great and glorious before the world!' But you I command to make true what I shall tell him."

She sank back. Her head fell heavily on her pillow of dry leaves; her breathing became short and painful, and her eyes again assumed the vacant expression that had struck such terror to Mohammed's soul.

"Mother, I entreat you, answer me once more! Do you hear me? Do you love me?"

"I hear you," murmured the stiffening lips. "And do I love you? Your mother's love struggled with Death for a whole year. He tried to drag me hence, and I struggled with him day after day, and night after night. Love helped me to deceive you, or you would have seen your mother dying day by day. Now, I am going hence, and the agathodæmon will give me new garments, and a new countenance full of youth and beauty, that your father may see me as I looked in the days of our youthful love. O my son, may the woman you are to love be not far distant; may she soon wing her flight to you, the dove of innocence, with the countenance of love and the fragrance of the rose? May she open heaven unto you with her star-like eyes? This is my last blessing, my son. Allah watch over you! Farewell!"

The words were soft and low, like the whispering of a departing spirit. Mohammed had listened eagerly, his ear held close to her lips, and he still listened when the light of his mother's eyes was extinguished, and the hand of Death had swept over her countenance, imparting to the white brow a yellow, and to the lips a blue tint. Suddenly he shuddered, raised his head and looked at his mother. He then uttered a shriek, a loud, fearful shriek, that caused the mourning-women outside to bound to their feet, for they knew that it was thus that survivors shriek when Death seizes his prey.

They now commence their mournings, and farther off other cries and lamentations are heard. The latter are uttered by the friends of Ibrahim Aga. They have placed themselves near the hut to begin, according to a religious custom, the service of the dead, as soon as the soul shall have left the body.

They form a circle near the open door. Their arms crossed over their breasts, they stand there, moving their heads continually from one side to the other. "Allah il Allah!" they cry, and within stand the women shrieking, yelling, and lamenting, over the deceased. They at last arouse Mohammed, who had swooned away beside the body. He springs to his feet, pushes back the women, and bounds into the middle of the circle of men, who whirl around faster and faster; they suppose he has come to join in their ceremony, but he pushes them aside and rushes forth. He rushes so rapidly up the pathway that no one can follow him, and no one attempts to do so.

"His grief must exhaust itself," they say to each other. "When it has done so, and evening comes, he will return."

The evening came, but Mohammed had not returned to perform the sacred duty of watching over the dead through the night, as it became an only son to do. The mourning-women had departed to rest after their exertions. They now returned, the sheik having ordered that they should perform the night-watch in the absence of the son, in order that the ghins might not enter and pronounce their curse over the house, condemning the future generations, descending from the dead, to misery.

The mourning-women remained the entire night, sometimes interrupting their prayers, to say to each other that Mohammed, the only son, was really a very unnatural child, and respected his mother very little, or he would not be wandering about among the rocks, while his mother's body was still unburied. Then they console themselves with the thought that he will come in the morning, when the tomtom resounds, which calls the people to the funeral.

The signal is heard on the following morning, and the men come carrying in their crossed arms the Koran.

The sheik himself condescends to appear at Sitta Khadra's funeral. She was an honest, virtuous woman, and is to be buried with honor beside the grave of her husband, Ibrahim.

The mourners slowly assemble. The tomtom is still vainly summoning the only son.

The body has been laid on two boards covered with woollen cloths, and is borne out on the shoulders of four men. The mourning-women yell and shriek, the men murmur prayers, and the drum resounds, while the procession is slowly moving toward the place of burial.

Mohammed hears nothing of all this. He has fled to the cave, once his paradise, now his hell. There he lies on his mat, looking up through the opening in the rock at the heavens, and cursing the ghins who have robbed him of his mother. But his agathodæmon will intercede with Allah for his forgiveness for the despair which causes his lips to utter curses of which his heart knows nothing. The good spirits will intercede for the poor boy.

"Driven out into the world alone. Poorer than the eagle's brood in their nest overhead, that have tender parents to care for them. No one cares for me."

The echo mournfully repeats the piercing cry that had resounded throughout the cave, and says sadly: "No one, no one!" He then sinks down on his mat, and lies there motionless and insensible with grief and horror.

Without, the sea murmurs gently, as if to sing a song of consolation. He hears it not. All is now so still that the little snakes and green lizards with their sparkling eyes venture forth again from the hiding-places to which they had fled when his despairing voice reverberated through the cave. They creep up to the dark, motionless mass that lies there on the ground. The sun sends its rays through the opening in the rock, and throws a streak of golden light across the prostrate body, and the little animals crawl and rustle about to enjoy the sunshine.

A large rock-serpent has crawled from its lair and coiled itself beside Mohammed; its eyes glitter in the sunlight like precious stones.

"I will die—die!" he suddenly cries out, and springs to his feet so quickly that the serpents and lizards barely escape being trodden on as they escape to their holes behind the rocks. "Here I will remain! How often, in the past, have I longed to be in my cave—my only secret—my only possession! Once, to gratify this longing, I came here, and then turned back, and said to myself: He who cannot practise self-denial, cannot enjoy! And now I have practised it, and yet I have not enjoyed! But now I will enjoy—will enjoy death, at least! Yes, I am resolved," said he, with trembling lips—"I will remain here and enjoy death! What does this struggling from day to day avail—this dreaming of future glory? Each succeeding day is in poverty and misery the same. I was a fool to dream of future glory. Now I will die! Let others be happy! Let the slave, Osman Bey, attain what the free Mohammed cannot attain. He is welcome to his reward—death is at the end of it all, for him, too!"

He looks, through the opening in the rock, at the heavens above him, and then rises higher to look down at the sea also, as though he wished to take leave of it in a last glance. He then lies down on his mat again. "Yes, let the slave Osman achieve glory—the free Mohammed prefers death!"

And yet, against his will, he must still think of the slave who has gone out into the world over the sea to the wondrous land of Egypt, where the caliphs were once enthroned, where their tombs still stand, and where the Mamelukes now rule in their stead. He still dreams of this wondrous land, with its ancient cities, and thinks that these may be the death-dreams that are to lull him to his eternal rest.

He is suddenly awakened from his dreams by a horrible sensation. It is hunger—the hunger that rages within him—it is thirst that parches his lips. The soul wishes to die, but the body calls the man back to life, and appeals to him so loudly, so vehemently, that he cannot but listen to its voice.

He resists with all his might. He will conquer this miserable hunger, this despicable thirst; he will not heed the pains that rend his body, he will be strong, and a hero, in death at least.

Convulsively he clings to the rock as if to a support against the allurements that strive to draw him out into life. But the voice of the world appeals to him, in louder and louder tones, and fearful are the torments he is undergoing.

The spirit must at last succumb to the demands of Nature. He rises to give to the body what of right belongs to the body: nourishment—drink and food.

He creeps to the entrance, and is so weak that he can hardly pass through the opening, which he had formerly made still narrower, that no one might discover it. He is so weak that he can scarcely stand upright; his swollen lips are bleeding; his brain is burning, and he sinks down upon a rock. A kindly voice now calls him. He hears it, but lacks the strength to answer.

"Mohammed! Mohammed!" is heard again, and now the merchant, Lion, approaches from behind a projecting rock. He had seen the boy, but knowing his proud heart, and fearing to put him to shame by showing himself, and saying that he came to his assistance, he had lingered behind the rock. He now kneels down beside the boy, bends over him, kisses his lips, and whispers loving words in his ear.

"Poor child! Your mother, who loved you so tenderly, would weep bitterly if she could see you in this condition. Poor boy, you must strengthen yourself! I know you have eaten nothing, and I have brought you food!"

He drew a bottle from from his pocket, and poured a little wine on his lips. Mohammed tried to resist, but the body was stronger than the will. He greedily swallows the wine, and, without knowing it, asks for more. The merchant smiles approvingly, and pours a little more on his lips, and then gives him a small piece of white bread that he had brought with him, and rejoices when he sees Mohammed breathing with renewed life.

"What are you doing?" he murmured; "I must die, that I may go to my mother!"

The merchant stooped down lower over the boy, and kissed him. "Your mother, who loves you so dearly, sends you this kiss, through me. She confided to me that she must die, and I promised her that I would bring you a kiss from her whenever I saw you. With this kiss she commands you to be brave and happy throughout life."

And, as he ceased speaking, he inclined his head and kissed him a second time.

Now, as he receives this kiss from his mother, the tears suddenly burst from his eyes and pour down his cheeks—hot tears—and yet they cool and alleviate the burning pains of his soul.

"You weep," said the merchant, whose own cheeks were wet with grief; "weep on, pain must have its relief in tears, and even a man need not be ashamed of them."

He sat down beside Mohammed, drew him close to his side, supporting the boy's head on his bosom, and spoke to him of his dear mother.

"Nor are you poor, Mohammed. Your mother returned to me your love-offering, together with other sums she had saved. I have fifty gold-pieces for you! Yes, fifty glittering gold-pieces! You can now dress better than formerly, until provision is made for your future; and, if you should need advice or assistance, come to me. You know that I am your friend. And now, be happy and courageous; remember that poor Sitta Khadra has suffered much, and let her be at rest now. Another friend is awaiting you above on the rock; will you go up to him?"

"It is Osman, is it not?" asked Mohammed, as he dried his eyes. "Am I not right?"

The merchant inclined his head. "He could not come down the steep path, or he would be here now."

"I will go to him; I know he loves me. He will not laugh when he sees that I have been weeping."

No, Osman did not laugh. When he saw his friend coming, he advanced to meet him with extended arms, and they embraced each other tenderly, tears standing in the eyes of both.

All was still; nothing could be heard but the murmur of the sea, and the rustling of the wind.

The merchant, who had at first stood in silence beside the two, now walked noiselessly away.

They love each other, and what they have to say, no one else should hear.

Mohammed stands up and dries his eyes; he wishes to be composed. Osman holds out his hand:

"Your mother is dead, but she survives in your friends, and your mother and your friend now extend the hand to you. Mohammed, come with me to my house, for my house is yours, too. I will not have you remain alone; you must come with me."

Mohammed shook his head gravely. "It cannot be—I will not become a slave!"

"Come, out of love for me. Not as my slave, but as my friend. Oh, I am so lonely, and you are the only one who loves, and can console, poor, sickly Osman."

"I will come to you!" exclaimed Mohammed, drawing his friend to his bosom. "Even as a slave would I come, for I should be my friend's slave. I will come to you."

CHAPTER X.

COUSROUF PACHA.

THE days had passed quietly and monotonously for Mohammed since the death of his mother.

To climb among the rocks with his gun in stormy weather, to cross over in his boat to Imbra, after the fishermen's nets and fish, and to tame the young Arabian steeds of the tschorbadji that had as yet known no bridle, these were now Mohammed's chief pursuits and pleasures, and in them he engaged with passionate ardor when at leisure, that is, when not with his friend Osman Bey.

That which they had vowed to each other after the death of Mohammed's mother, they had kept—true and firm friendship, brotherly and confidential intercourse. With one wish only of young Osman, had Mohammed not complied: he had not gone to live with him in the proud, governmental building—had refused to share his friend's luxury and magnificence, and to allow his poverty to be put to shame by the benefits which he would have been compelled to accept.

The hut, inherited from his parents, he retained as his own dwelling. In it nothing had been changed; the mat on which his mother had died was now his bed. In the pitcher out of which she had drunk, he each morning brought fresh water from the spring, and all the articles she had used, poor and miserable as they were, now constituted the furniture of his hut.

In vain had Osman continually renewed his entreaties: "Come to me. Live with me; not for your own sake, Mohammed. I know that you despise luxury, and that the splendor that surrounds us is offensive to you. Not for your own, but for my sake, Mohammed, come to me and live with us. My father is so anxious to have you do so, for he knows that your presence is the best medicine for me. I feel so well and strong when I look at you, Mohammed; and, when you sometimes yield to my entreaties and spend the night with me in my room, it seems to me I sleep better, for I know that my friend is watching over me. Stay with me, Mohammed!"

These soft entreaties, accompanied by tender looks, touched Mohammed, but they could not shake his resolution.

"I cannot and dare not accept, Osman. It would make me unhappy; I should feel myself under too much restraint; I must, above all, preserve the consciousness of being perfectly free and independent. I must feel that I can leave when I choose, and for this very reason is it so sweet to remain—to be with you, unfettered for your sake only, Osman. If I should come and live with you in the palace of the tschorbadji, do you not think I should be an object of dislike to your slaves and servants; that they would point at me when I passed, and whisper: 'How proud and insolent he is, and yet he is less than I! We are the slaves of our master, and repay with our work the money he spends on our account. But what is he? A proud beggar supported by charity, who has the impudence to give himself the airs of a gentleman.' Your slaves would say this of me, and mock me with my beggar pride. But, as it is, I am free, and my clothing is my own. It is certainly not as handsome as yours, the caftan not embroidered, the shawl not of Persian make, and the kuffei around my fez not inworked with gold. But yet it is my own, and it pleases me to be thus plainly dressed, as it becomes the son of Ibrahim Aga. I live as it becomes me; my hut is dark and poor—but it is mine, and in it I am a free man. I do not sleep on soft cushions; a plain mat is my bed, but on this mat my mother reposed, and on it she died. To me it is sacred. I pray to my mother each night, Osman, and I greet her each morning when I drink out of the wooden cup so often touched by her lips. I should have to give up all this, and come here to repose in splendid apartments, sleep on silken mattresses, and allow myself to be waited on by slaves who do not belong to me. No, Osman, do not demand this; let me come to you each day, of my own free-will and love."

He extended his hand to his friend, who, as usual, lay reclining on his couch, and Osman pressed it warmly in his own.

"You are a proud boy," said he, in low tones, "and though your refusal gives me pain, I can still understand that in your sense you are right, Mohammed. In short, you do not wish to be grateful to anybody."

"And yet I am grateful to you, Osman," said Mohammed, regarding him tenderly; "all my heart is full of gratitude and love for you; but how much do I owe to you! Is it not for your sake that your father, the proud tschorbadji, is so kind and friendly to me? Does he not allow me, the lowly born, to sit with him at his table, and treat me as his equal?"

"Because he well knows that you would otherwise never come to me again," said Osman, with a sad smile. "He is careful not to hurt or offend you in any way, for, as you know, my father loves me very dearly, and it would give him pain to deprive me of the only friend I possess. My father knows that you are my benefactor, and that I live from your life, Mohammed. Look at me wonderingly, if you will; I am a sick child, and shall remain one, although years have made me a youth. And let me tell you, Mohammed, I shall never become a strong, healthy man. I have very weak lungs, inherited from my mother, and if it were not for you, if I had not been sustained by your healthy and vigorous mind and disposition, I should have died long since. Therefore, do not say that you have cause to be grateful to me. My father and I both have cause to be grateful to you, for my father loves me and rejoices in my life; and I, too, am very glad to live. The sun is so beautiful, it is so delightful to look at the deep-blue sky, the flowers are so fragrant, and finally it is such a pleasure to see you and to rejoice in your vigorous mind. I therefore owe every thing to you, Mohammed, and father and I know this, and are very thankful."

"Those are sweet words, Osman," said Mohammed, bestowing an affectionate look on his friend. "You are so noble and generous, that you wish to make it appear that all the benefits I have received from you were bestowed by me. But Allah knows that I am profoundly grateful, and I am aware, too, that I have cause to be. Only consider, that to you and your father I owe all that I know. Have I not been allowed to share the instruction given you? Has not the scha-er, whom your father, as his narratives pleased us so much, kept here at a heavy expense, instructed me, too, and taught us both the history of our own and of all other countries? Have I not had the same opportunities as yourself of learning of all that is going on out in the world? Did I not share your instruction in all other branches? Have not the poems of our land been read to us, and have we not learned to understand the Koran, and receive into our souls the wise teachings of the prophet Mahommed? Have we not also learned the difficult science of algebra, and are we not familiar with the laws of justice? Do I not owe it entirely to the instruction which I have shared with you that I can also read the Koran and the books of the prophets and poets? Ah, Osman, I still remember with shame how I was sorrowfully compelled to confess to our teacher in our first lessons, that I knew and understood nothing; that I could not read, and did not even know the letters and figures."

"And how rapidly you learned all this!" said Osman. "It surprised everybody, and I assure you the scha-er is always charmed when he speaks of you, and he listens admiringly to what you say after the lessons are over. Yes, the scha-er says, if you only would you could become one of the greatest of scholars, so rapid has been your progress; but—"

"But one thing I have not learned," said Mohammed, interrupting him with a smile. "You were about to begin the old story, were you not, Osman? 'But you never would learn to write,' you were about to say."

"Yes, that is what I intended to say, my friend, and this one thing you must still learn: to use the pen and write down your thoughts on paper."

"I cannot," cried Mohammed, impatiently; "my hands are too rough. The oar and the gun have made my fingers so stiff that I cannot use the pen."

"Then let it be so, I will torment you about it no longer," said Osman, with a sigh. "You are my head and I am your hand. You think for me, and I shall write for you. So shall it be throughout our entire lives, for together we two must remain, and nothing can separate us. Is it not so, my friend? Say it, and say it often, that nothing can separate us. For you must know that if fate should tear you from me it would kill me, and that you cannot intend: therefore, we shall ever remain together, shall we not?"

"We shall ever remain together," said Mohammed. "That is—Osman, consider well what you are saying, for you are nearly eighteen years old."

"As you are," responded Osman, smiling.

"Only with this difference, that your father will give you with your eighteenth year, a beautiful aristocratic lady to wife, and establish a harem for you; while Mohammed Ali will never have either a sweetheart or a harem, but will always remain alone and unwedded."

"Who knows?" replied Osman, laughing. "Those who assure us they will never love, says the poet, are the one's that fall in love soonest. One is easily surprised by the enemy who is not feared, and against whose snares the heart is not on its guard. . . . This will be your fate, Mohammed. Your heart is not on its guard, and does not fear the enemy, love. . . . But my poor heart has no cause to fear and be on its guard; let me repeat it, Mohammed; look at me. Can the poor, pale youth, with his wan countenance, his sunken breast, and his weak breath—can he think of marrying? Or do you suppose I would care to become a subject of jest in the harem to the female slaves and servants, who would have to wait on the sick man? True, the tschorbadji, my father, has sometimes spoken of giving me an establishment of my own with my eighteenth year. I remained silent, for fortunately it is at present impossible. My establishment was to have been above in the upper saloons, and fortunately Cousrouf Pacha with his harem is still in possession of that part of our house. May he long remain there! I do not wish it on his account, or because I love him, but solely because my father must now delay the execution of this plan. May Cousrouf Pacha, therefore, long remain!"

"I do not wish it," said Mohammed, gloomily; "he is a hard, proud man, better in his own estimation than anybody here in Cavalla, better even than the tschorbadji. I never saw a prouder man. And what right has he to be so? Has he not fallen into disgrace with the sultan? Did he not come here because he was banished from Stamboul? And do you know why he was banished? I will tell you: because—so have strangers who have come here reported—because he sought the death of his benefactor and master, the grand admiral, Hussein Pacha, in order that he might put himself in his place.—Isn't this horrible, Osman? The grand-admiral had bought him as a slave, and then, because he loved him, made him free, and a wealthy man; he had him instructed, and persuaded the sultan to appoint him bey and pacha; and in return for all this, Cousrouf Pacha attempted to poison his master and benefactor, and calumniated him to the grand sultan. Isn't this horrible?"

"It certainly would be if it were true," said Osman; "yet I do not believe it. Much is told and said of the great and mighty, and they are often calumniated and accused of evil deeds which they have not committed. If it were so, do you not suppose the grand-admiral, Hussein Pacha, the mighty man, and the grand-sultan, would have punished him as he deserved? No, my father says differently, and has received from Stamboul other and more reliable information. Cousrouf Pacha has fallen into disgrace—that is a fixed fact—and the sultan has sent him into exile. Yet he did so against the wish of the Grand-Admiral Hussein. Do you know why Cousrouf has fallen into disgrace? Because he refused to go to Egypt as pacha, declaring that was equivalent to sending him into an open grave, as he should never return home from that land of rebels and Mamelukes. The sultan wished to send him to Egypt because he suspected him of having a secret amorous intrigue with one of the sultanas. The sultan had been told that Cousrouf Pacha was in the habit of being secretly conducted to the sultana's chamber at night by a female slave. As the sultan stealthily approached and opened the door of the chamber, he heard a rustling and whispering, but it was so dark in the room that he could see nothing. He called slaves with torches to his assistance. They searched the room, but found nothing. The sultana stood on the balcony looking out into the starlit night. She met her husband with a smiling countenance, saying the night was so beautiful, she had gone out to gaze at the stars. The sultan, it is said, gnashed his teeth with rage, but kept silence, as it would have been unworthy of his dignity to threaten where he could not also punish. On the following morning he sent Cousrouf Pacha into exile to this place, my father tells me. But it is thought the sultan's anger will soon expend itself, and that his friend the grand-admiral, Hussein Pacha, will succeed in restoring his favorite to honor. Cousrouf Pacha, my father says, is already heartily tired of his tedious sojourn here, and has written to Hussein Pacha that he is now ready to go to Egypt as pacha."

"Ready to revel in the glories of the world! Truly this great Cousrouf Pacha is very condescending!" cried Mohammed, in derisive tones. "He acts as though he were conferring a favor in accepting that for which another would give his heart's blood."

"Would you, Mohammed?" asked Osman, smiling.

"I would give my blood, drop by drop, only retaining enough to sustain life. Oh, to live there! To go to Egypt as the grand-sultan's pacha, to rule in that beautiful land, to make the rebels, the Mamelukes, and the beys, bow down in the dust! To vanquish them all, Osman, this is my dream of bliss, this is—but no, I am still the same foolish boy, dreaming of impossibilities! See, there come those of whom we have been speaking," raising his hand and pointing to the hall-way. "There comes the tschorbadji with Cousrouf Pacha. Let me go now, Osman; it is unpleasant to be in the vicinity of this haughty man; my heart always fiercely resents his insolence! Let me go!"

Osman held him back. "See, they are looking at us, Mohammed. If you should go now, it would look as though you desired to avoid my father also, and that you assuredly do not wish. Moreover, the haughty gentleman might think that respect for him made you run away, as the lizard flees before the footstep of man. Stay!"

"You are right," said Mohammed, "I shall stay."

He straightened himself up, threw his head back proudly, folded his arms on his breast, and stood beside his friend's couch, gazing composedly at the two gentlemen who were advancing toward them, followed by a number of slaves.

As they came nearer, the tschorbadji stepped hastily forward to greet his son with loving, tender words. Mohammed inclined his head with profound reverence before the father of his beloved friend. He then raised his head again, and firmly met the glance of the haughty Cousrouf Pacha, without any manifestation of deference whatever. The latter stepped forward, and greeted Osman with friendly words; he then turned, and fixed his dark-gray eyes on the young man who stood beside him, awaiting his deferential salutation.

But Mohammed did not salute him. He still stood erect, his arms folded on his breast, beside his friend's couch.

The pacha slowly turned to the governor. "Tell me, tschorbadji, who is this person? Your slave, is he not?"

"No," cried Osman, rising partially from his couch, and anticipating his father's reply. "No, your excellency, he is not our slave, but my friend, my beloved friend, Mohammed Ali."

"Your friend! A great honor for such a lad, too great an honor, I should think," said Cousrouf Pacha, directing a fierce glance at Mohammed, who still stood erect beside him.

"Why should your excellency think so?" asked he in sharp, almost threatening tones. "Why is it too great an honor that the son of the tschorbadji calls me his friend? Has it not occurred that aristocratic gentlemen have elevated to an equality with themselves, and made friends even of, slaves, and purchased boys? I remember hearing the scha-er tell of a Circassian slave whom the grand-admiral, at Stamboul, purchased, and subsequently called his friend. He was not ashamed of him, although the lad called Cousrouf was, after all, only a slave."

"In the name of Allah, I pray you, be still!" cried the tschorbadji, looking anxiously at Mohammed.

"And why should he be still?" asked Cousrouf, in cold, cutting tones. "He is merely telling a story learned from the scha-er. You know, tschorbadji, it is customary to pay story-tellers, and give them a piaster.—Here, take your pay, you little scha-er."

The pacha drew from his silken purse, filled with gold-pieces, a ducat, and threw it at the boy's feet.

Mohammed uttered a cry of rage, and took up the gold-piece as though he intended to throw it in the pacha's face. But Osman held his hand, and begged him in a low voice to be composed.

Mohammed struggled to compose himself. His face was pale, his lips trembled, and his eyes gleamed with wrath and hatred, as he glanced at the pacha; then his countenance became firm and composed. He beckoned to a slave who stood at a distance, to approach, and threw him the gold-piece. "The slave gives the slave his reward. Take it, thou slave!"

A moment of silence and anxious suspense intervened, and then Mohammed's and the pacha's eyes met again in a fierce, piercing glance. The pacha then turned, and addressed the tschorbadji:

"If he were my servant," said he, "I should have him taken out to the court-yard for his insolence. If he there received, as he richly deserves, the bastinado, I think he would soon become humble and quiet. The viper bites no longer when its fangs are extracted.—I tell you, tschorbadji, if he were my servant, he should now receive the bastinado."

"And if you were my servant," exclaimed Mohammed, haughtily, "I should treat you in precisely the same manner, sir. The bastinado is very painful, I am told, and you probably know it by personal experience. But this you should know, too, sir, that here on the peninsula of Contessa, slaves only are chastised, and slaves only receive the bastinado. I, however, have never been a slave, but always a free man; and what I am and shall be, I am, I am proud to say, through myself alone. I have not been bought and bargained for, and I sleep better in my dark little hut than others who were once slaves, and who, having risen through the favor of their masters, now repose on silken couches."

"Tschorbadji Hassan!" cried Cousrouf, pale with anger, and hardly capable of restraining himself from striking the bold youth in the face with his own fist—"Tschorbadji Hassan, you shall punish the insolence of this servant who dares to insult me, Cousrouf Pacha. I demand of you punishment for this insolence."

"I have broken no law, and there is no law that condemns me to punishment," said Mohammed, firmly and composedly.

"Your excellency does me the honor to dispute with me, that is all. With us punishment is meted out according to the law only, and not at the pleasure of every grand gentleman."

The tschorbadji stepped up to Cousrouf Pacha, and earnestly conjured him to show mercy to his son's friend, for his sake.

"Consider that Osman is my only child, and my only happiness. Consider that he loves Mohammed as if he were a brother. The physicians say he would die if separated from Mohammed. Be merciful, and forgive the insolence provoked by your own overbearing words. I entreat you to be merciful, and to come away with me."

He took Cousrouf's arm in his own, and drew him away, almost forcibly entreating him, with all the anxiety of a father's heart, to forgive the uncultured youth, who knew nothing of becoming deportment and polished manners. He was an untamed lion, unfamiliar with the gentle ways of the domestic animals.

"And yet I wish I had this young lion in my power," said Cousrouf, gnashing his teeth with rage, as he followed the governor. "I should extract his teeth, and prove to the monster that he was not a lion, but only a miserable cat, to be trodden under my feet!"

The tschorbadji drew him away more rapidly, that Mohammed might not hear him. He had looked back and perceived that Mohammed was standing still, gazing at them with a threatening eye, and, in reality with the bearing of a lion prepared for the deadly spring.

When they had disappeared, Osman rose from his cushions, stood up, threw his arms around his friend's neck, and kissed his quivering lips.

"I thank you, my hero, my king, my lion! You stood there like David before Goliath, and overthrew him in the dust. You made the insolent giant small, you hero. I thank you, my Mohammed!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE REVOLT.

THE great square which lay in the centre of the village of Praousta resounded with wild outcries and clamorings. All the men of the place had assembled by the sea-shore; they were generally honest, peaceful sailors, but to-day they were raging rebels roused to revolt against those in authority, and refusing obedience to the tschorbadji.

Two pale, trembling men stood in the midst of the revolting crowd. They were evidently Turks, by their closely-fitting uniforms, and the scarlet fez on their heads; the short arms which hung at their sides showed them to be the *kavassen*, or the collectors of the tschorbadji.

These collectors were always an abomination to the people of Praousta; they greeted them constantly with murmuring when they came to collect the taxes, and often, before now, the appeasing, tranquillizing words of the sheik had alone secured the payment of the sums demanded. To-day, however, their long-restrained indignation had broken forth. To-day, although the sea was so still and peaceful, no one had gone out to fish, for it had been fully determined that on this day they would refuse the demands of the governor's collectors. The collectors had gone to the village, suspecting nothing. The assessment had been brought by one of them several days before to the sheik, who had received it with a very troubled countenance.

"A double tax!" he had said; "that will be most unwelcome to the men of Praousta."

The messenger of the tschorbadji merely shrugged his shoulders. "They will pay it, nevertheless, as the men in Cavalla and other places have done. The money must be collected." Then, with the haughty bearing which the officials of the tschorbadji always assumed, he retired.

The sheik called together a council of the oldest men of the village and the *ulemas*, and informed them that the tschorbadji was compelled to lay a double tax on them at this time, because, although his own expenses had been greater, he was obliged to forward the usual amount to Stamboul. New roads had been built ; besides that, the tobacco-crop had failed, and new public buildings had been erected. All these expenses must be met, as well as the full amount for Stamboul, which must on no account be lessened.

The men had declared at once, with angry words, that they would never pay the tax. On the morning of the day when the two collectors came from Cavalla, the men of the village assembled in the square as they had determined to do, and greeted them with loud and angry clamorings.

"We will pay no double tax," cried Abdallah, the leader of the fishermen. "It is quite enough that we are obliged to pay any tax. What do the grand-sultan and his ministers do for us ? Not one of them aids us when our crops fail or when we suffer from other misfortunes. When we have double crops, must we not always pay a double tax ? But this year we have not even good crops. Our tobacco-crops have failed ; our fishing-nets, with all the fish we had taken, have been lost in the storms. Tell us, then, for what reasons we must pay a double tax ?"

"The reasons, my dear fishermen," said the collectors—"the reasons are, that the tschorbadji commands it, and his commands must be obeyed, because the grand-sultan has made him your governor."

"If those were reasons," shrieked the fishermen, "the tschorbadji could drive us from our huts, and take from us all that is ours. Those are no reasons ; no, we will not pay the tax !"

"You must, and you will !" cried the second officer.

That was the signal for all the men to draw their knives with lightning-speed from their belts. They brandished them in their fists, pressing from all sides upon the two officers, and swearing to kill them if they did not go at once to Cavalla and announce what had occurred here.

Some of the men rushed off to the dwelling of the sheik, while others hastened to bring the ulemas to the square.

"Are we to pay the double tax, sheik ? Speak for us ; tell the officers what answer they must take to the tschorbadji."

The sheik bowed kindly on every side as he made his way through the circle of armed men. All was profound silence as he came before the two officers, and all present listened in breathless silence to his words.

"Lo, ye servants of justice!" exclaimed the sheik in a solemn voice, "I say, go up to the city, and inform the tschorbadji that he has demanded more than is just of the men of Praousta."

An overwhelming, thundering huzza interrupted the sheik.

"Speak on," was then the cry. "Let us hear what the good sheik has to say to us!"

Once more there was breathless silence, and the sheik proceeded in solemn tones:

"State to the tschorbadji that, by the will of Allah, we have been pursued by storms and misfortunes. We submit to the will of Allah, and pray to the prophet, to implore him to be merciful to us. If he hears our prayers, and the next harvest is blessed, and the fish are plentiful in our nets, and if then the purses of the people of Praousta are again filled, they will gladly pay the tschorbadji the accustomed tax, but not a double tax."

"No, not a double tax!" shrieked the men. "We must pay, that the tschorbadji may live in pride and splendor with his aristocratic guest, who keeps a harem, and has himself borne about in a palanquin, or rides a splendid horse through the streets, while we have to content ourselves with humbly walking. No, we pay no more for the tschorbadji and his aristocratic guest. Long live our sheik, who stands by us! Go up, officers, and deliver the message he has given you."

The officers, frightened and trembling, were well pleased to escape unharmed from the raging crowd. They passed hurriedly through the narrow passage which was opened for them on the way toward Cavalla.

"Long live our sheik! Allah be praised for him!" cried the men, raising him and the three ulemas, in their enthusiasm, on their shoulders, and carrying them to their dwellings.

"You stood by us, O sheik, and we wish to thank you," said

Abdallah, speaking for all, when they had put the sheik down before his house.

"I stand by you," answered the sheik, giving his hand to all, "but you must stand by each other. We have held a council through the entire night, and we have concluded that the demand is unjust, and have therefore, in the name of the people, declined to meet it. Now, however, you must not be intimidated; you must be firm. Then no one will dare to molest us."

"We will be firm in what we have determined, and not give way," cried they all. "Long live the sheik and the ulemas!"

"Now return quietly to your houses, and wait to see what the tschorbadji will do," said the sheik. "We shall see if he is content with your refusal."

The men obeyed the order of the sheik, and went to their huts, to await there the next movement.

The two officers returned, with rapid steps, to Cavalla.

The governor was seated in the hall, with his favorite, his Osman, by whose side was Mohammed, who had yielded to the entreaties of his friend, and spent the last few months with him.

Osman considered it a great kindness that Mohammed had, at last, agreed to his wishes, and had remained with him at night. When the governor looked joyfully at his son, and said he had never seen him so gay and happy, Osman smiled and nodded toward Mohammed. "You should thank Mohammed; as long as he remains in our house, the air seems purer and fresher to me. He alone understands how to make me well, and, if I could always have him with me, I would be the happiest of men."

The tschorbadji offered his hand to Mohammed, bowing and smiling kindly. "Mohammed, I wish you would, at last, yield to the united prayers of my son and myself, and would consent to live in this house. Let me have two sons, and I shall be doubly rich."

"In veneration I will be your son," replied Mohammed, pressing the governor's hand to his brow; "I will obey you in all things! One thing alone do not demand—that I shall irrevocably relinquish my freedom. Let me come and go at my pleasure. Love always draws me back to my Osman, even when, in the restlessness of my heart, I wander on the sea, or in the mountains, or remain solitary in my silent hut. Friendship for you has bound chains about my soul, and I must always return. Leave to me the feeling of independence, or I shall not be happy."

Osman nodded smilingly to him. "It shall be as you wish, and we will never weary him again, my father, with our prayers. He will return to us, he says, and Mohammed always keeps his word.—But look, father! What can be the matter with these two officers who are hurrying toward us!"

"They seem to have met with some misfortune; they look pale and excited, and are coming here without being announced," he said, rising from his cushions, and beckoning to the collectors, who had remained respectfully standing at the entrance, to come forward.—"Well, what is the matter? You look as disturbed as if something dreadful had happened to you!"

"Yes, governor, something dreadful has happened," they answered, bowing deeply. "We have been down to Praousta, as your excellency ordered, to collect the double tax."

"And you have brought the gold with you, and given it to my treasurer?"

"No, we have not brought it!"

"Not brought it!" exclaimed the tschorbadji, with the utmost astonishment; "I send you to collect the taxes, and you return without the money! Have thieves fallen upon you, and robbed you? My collectors have allowed the gold to be taken from them, and now dare to appear, empty-handed, before me!"

"O governor, we are innocent," replied the men; "no thieves took the money from us, but the men of Praousta have revolted; they have assembled together in the market-place, and have solemnly declared that they will never pay the double tax!"

While they were making their report, Mohammed sprung from his seat, and listened breathlessly to them.

"They refused to pay the tax," said the tschorbadji, in an angry voice. "And did you not go to the sheik and ulemas?"

"The men of Praousta went themselves, and brought out the sheik and the ulemas, that they might speak decisively for all. We were to take their answer to the tschorbadji."

"And they did this?" cried Mohammed, forgetting all proper reverence, and speaking to the men in the presence of the governor.

"Yes, they did this," returned the collectors, breathing hard.

"What did they say!" demanded the tschorbadji, excitedly.

"The sheik looked at us contemptuously, and ordered us to state to the tschorbadji that Praousta had no thought of paying either the double or the simple tax."

"And the ulemas?" asked Osman, rising from his couch, "did they confirm what the sheik said?"

"Yes, sir, they confirmed what the sheik said," answered the collectors.

"It is then an open revolt," cried the outraged tschorbadji. "They refuse obedience to my commands!"

"Yes, they refuse to obey you!" repeated the collectors. "Every fisherman has armed himself with sword and knife, and swears to die sooner than pay this unjust tax, as they call it."

"And you allowed yourselves to be frightened by such words," cried Mohammed, with flaming eyes. "And you did not fall upon them, sword in hand, to force them to their duty!"

"We were but two against fifty!"

"Two men against fifty cowards! I should think the men would have carried the day. But you are not men; you did not even draw your swords and fell this seditious sheik to the earth!"

"The people would have torn us to pieces!" exclaimed the collectors, "if we had attempted it."

"You would have perished in the fulfilment of your duty!" cried Mohammed. "Far better that, than to return home with the knowledge that you had acted as cowards!"

Osman looked wonderingly at his friend, while the tschorbadji stood lost in thought, his countenance growing darker and darker.

"This is revolt—rebellion!" he said, after a pause. "What shall I do? The men of Praousta are remarkable for their strength, as well as for their free and independent opinions."

He ordered the collectors to leave the room, and await his call without; then paced thoughtfully up and down. The two young men dared not disturb him.

"I do not know what to do," he said, after a long silence. "I have no military force, and in Praousta dwell more than fifty brave, bold men. You know I have only fifty collectors in my service in all the districts of the peninsula. I do not know where to begin; even if I had the men, I would very unwillingly use force. I believe the best thing I can do would be to go down, with a few servants, to the village, and seek, by kind words, to quiet the people, and induce them to pay the tax. What do you think, my son, Osman?"

Mohammed listened, with flashing eyes, to the tschorbadji; and breathlessly awaited Osman's answer. But Osman only looked at his friend, and said to his father, "Ask Mohammed what he thinks."

"Well, then, you speak, Mohammed," said the tschorbadji; "what do you think of my proposition?"

"I think that such a thing should never be permitted. It does not become you to go and beg, when you should command, governor," he cried. "Will you empower me to collect the tax?"

"How will you do it?" asked the tschorbadji, with a doubting smile.

"That is my secret, governor. Give me authority to treat with the rebels, and give me, in addition, two collectors and six armed soldiers."

"I will give you my small body-guard. They are eight in number, and I give you full authority to collect the tax."

"I thank you, governor," cried Mohammed, with a beaming face. "You have given me a weighty commission, and you shall see that I will justify the confidence you place in me. I will go at once."

"Do so, and I will order my men to obey you in all things," said the tschorbadji.

"Farewell, my Osman," cried Mohammed—his whole being as full of energy and determination as if he were going to battle. He bowed smilingly to his friend, and passed from the hall with a firm step.

The collectors received the tschorbadji's order, to return to Praousta with Mohammed, with bowed heads and anxious countenances.

"They will murder us!" groaned one of them. "They are all armed with swords and knives, and they will tear our arms from us at once."

"If they should tear your arms from you, and you do not fall upon them, with tooth and nail," cried Mohammed, with determined look, "you are nothing but cowards, and I will kill you with my own hand!"

The tschorbadji had, in the mean time, called his small body-guard together, and commanded them to go down to Praousta with Mohammed, and to obey him in all things.

"Come, then, my men, let us go," cried Mohammed.

The tschorbadji detained him a moment. "Will you not take a weapon—you are entirely unarmed?"

"Yes, I will take a weapon. Not that I fear for myself; no, I have no fear; but I will make one more combatant against the rebels. Give me a sword and a pistol."

The tschorbadji himself brought both to him, and then bade him farewell.

Mohammed, at the head of the eight soldiers and the two collectors, went down the mountain-path to the village.

There every thing had become quiet. Obeying the words of the sheik, the men had gone to their huts, and did not see that Mohammed and his followers had entered the great mosque, which stood at the entrance of the village. Then Mohammed bowed down within the holy of holies, and, turning his head toward Mecca, prayed in a low voice to the prophet: "Thou seest, my lord and God, that I have raised my foot to take the first step on the way to my great future. Uphold my feet—let me not fall into the abyss of forgetfulness. Give me strength, that I may go forward without fainting. Be with me, Mohammed, thou great prophet. Permit thy stars to be a light unto me, and be merciful to the poorest of thy servants!"

Then, raising himself proudly up, he ordered the soldiers to close three of the entrances of the mosque, and to leave only the principal door open.

"Now draw your swords. Four of you remain with me in the mosque—the four others go down to the sheik and the ulemas. Inform them that an ambassador has come from the tschorbadji, to bring them an important message. Each of you three must bring one of the ulemas with you, and the fourth must bring the sheik here to me. Go at once, and return quickly.—And you," he said, turning to the four who remained behind, "swear to me, in the name of Allah and the prophet, that you will be hewn in pieces sooner than yield to the rebels!"

They all swore, placing their hands upon their swords, that they would be hewn in pieces sooner than yield. Mohammed nodded graciously to them.

"Good! When the soldiers bring the men we will surround them, and the rest will follow."

Their hands upon their swords, the soldiers stood waiting beside the door.

Mohammed remained silent and thoughtful in the middle of the mosque. He felt that a great, an important moment had come for him. He thought of his mother. "She hovers over me; she looks down, and sees her son enter on a new life. When I leave the mosque, I will be no longer the poor, despised boy; I will have proved myself a man. O my mother, look down on me, and pray to Allah to be merciful to me!"

A dark shadow crossed the rays of the sun which fell through the open door. It was one of the soldiers who came in with the sheik.

Mohammed did not step forward to meet him, as he should have done, out of respect for the old man, with his white beard. To-day he was no longer the poor boy, who must bow down before his superiors. He was himself one of the powers that be. He held his head aloft while the sheik approached.

"I was summoned in the name of the tschorbadji," said the sheik, looking with astonishment at Mohammed. "It is very strange that I find here no one but Mohammed Ali, the son of Ibrahim Aga. Had I known that the tschorbadji had sent a boy to me, I would have required him to bring me the message."

"I summoned you in the name of the tschorbadji, and in his name I stand here!" said Mohammed, proudly. "I am not a boy, as you are pleased to call me, but an acknowledged authority. I have received my authority from the tschorbadji, and I demand submission from you!"

"Submission to you!" exclaimed the sheik, with a contemptuous glance.

Mohammed's eyes flashed fiercely, as he placed his hand threateningly on his pistol.

"Yes, you the sheik, must yield to me. See! there are the others who dared to revolt.—Guard the sheik well, you men; the ulemas also!"

The latter had now approached, accompanied by the soldiers, and Mohammed informed them that he, in the name of the tschorbadji, insisted upon their gathering in the taxes.

"We cannot and will not do it!" answered the sheik, proudly. "It is an injustice to demand the double tax, and it would be folly to pay it. It is our duty to protect the community, and we will do it!"

"Well, do as you will!" cried Mohammed, with flashing eyes. "Who dares to preach rebellion shall surely die!—Hold fast these rebels, my men, bind their hands behind their backs with their own scarfs, and lead them to the governor's house. There let their heads fall, that all may know how justice punishes the rebellious."

"Help! help!" cried the sheik and the ulemas. "Help!"

Their cries resounded far and wide, and, while the soldiers were binding the ulemas and the sheik with their own scarfs, the armed people came pressing forward to the open door of the mosque.

Mohammed looked toward them with the raging glance of a lion.

"Who enters here, meets his death!" he cried, in a voice of thunder. The men without shrunk back before the soldiers' gleaming weapons, and hastened to the other doors, but they found them all closed, only the one entrance was open, the one at which the collectors stood.

Within lay the sheik and the ulemas, all bound, upon their knees, praying the men of Praousta to come to their help. The men sought once more to storm the entrance, and once more they were repulsed.

"I swear, by Allah and the prophet, that the rebels shall die if they do not submit!" cried Mohammed, aloud. "Place your daggers at their breasts."

The soldiers did as they were ordered, and their prisoners lay, with widely-extended eyes, and shrieks on their parted lips which they dared not utter, for fear the sword-points would pierce their breasts. Mohammed stood erect beside them, his hand on his sword.

Suddenly a piercing, terrific cry arose from the midst of the crowd, and a slender female figure, clad entirely in white, the face concealed by a veil, rushed into the mosque. The soldiers dared not repulse her as they had done the men, as she flew past them toward that dreadful group.

"My father, my father!" she cries, in wildly-imploring tones. "If you must die, I will die with you!"

A strange tremor seizes on Mohammed; that wonderful voice thrills him to his very heart.

The veiled one sinks down at his feet, and raises her arms pleadingly to him.

"If you kill him, kill me also!"

In her passionate gestures she seizes her veil with her clasped hands and tears it from her face.

Mohammed saw now for the first time the youthful and beautiful face of the fair girl who was called the "Flower of Praousta." Her great black eyes were fastened imploringly on his. Her scarlet lips quivered as she repeated, "Oh, kill him not, but, if you must, then let me die with him!"

He looked at her as if he felt some witchcraft at work, then suddenly bent down and drew the veil over her face, as if he dared no longer look on her beauty.

"Leave this place, I do not fight with women," he said, and his voice sounded almost like that of a man.

"Be merciful," she prayed, but there was a change in her voice also, it was no longer so humble, but trembled with inward emotion.

He turned from her.

"Return to your home," he said, in a commanding voice. "First, however, tell your father that he must submit himself, and prevail upon these rebels to become obedient. If he succeeds, I swear, in the name of Allah, that he shall return with you to his home. Speak to him, and prove the power of your words."

"Return, Masa," said the sheik, in an unfaltering voice. "It was most improper for you to come here. You did it from love to me, therefore it must be pardoned. Now, however, I order you to go home, and remain there, as it becomes a woman. I, however, praise Allah; he alone must decide my fate, and the fate of all."

"No, father, I cannot leave you," cried Masa, breathlessly, pressing her father's hands to her lips. "Remember, you are the lord of my life, the light of my eyes! Remember that I have no one but you in all the world, and that your Masa is as solitary as in a wilderness when you are not beside her. Remember that, O my father!"

"Enough!" interrupted Mohammed, in a harsh voice. "Enough words.—You there, you men of Praousta, will you pay the tax, the double tax, as the tschorbadji has ordered?"

The men, who had pressed close against the high porch outside the mosque, remained silent for a moment and looked hesitatingly before them.

"Will you pay it?" repeated Mohammed. "You will, I am sure."

"No!" cried the sheik, aloud. "You will not, you shall not, pay this tax!"

"No," repeated the three ulemas. "No, you will not, you shall not, pay this tax!"

Then suddenly, as if inspired by the bold words of the four prisoners, the men held themselves more erect, and, looking threateningly at Mohammed and at the soldiers, repeated what the ulemas had said. "No, we will not, we will not pay the tschorbadji the double tax ! We will pay neither the double nor the simple tax ! "

"Good ! you have spoken," said Mohammed. "Your fate is decided, and that of these men also !—Collectors, lock the door."

Masa uttered a cry, and, rushing to Mohammed, clung wildly to his knees.

"Mercy, lord, have mercy ! Think of your own father, think of your mother ! If you have a mother that you love, oh, think of her ! "

He pushed her roughly and hastily from him. That word pierced his heart like a knife, and still he dared not listen to it.

There was a threatening murmur among the men, and several sought to press forward, but the collectors threatened them with instant death if they came forward a single step.

Two of the soldiers approached the young girl to carry her out.

"Let no one dare touch me, or I will throw myself on your swords ! " she cried. "If I must go, I will do so. But on you be the blood of my father if it is shed ! I tell you, if you murder him, I will die also ; and if you have a father or a mother in heaven, I will accuse you, young man ! "

She uttered these words in a ringing voice, then flew toward the door. The soldiers pushed her out, and the collectors threw the iron-bound doors together.

"Now I turn to you," said Mohammed, breathing more freely, and looking toward the sheik and the ulemas.

"Will you murder us ? " asked the sheik Alepp, as he looked with calm dignity at the young man.

"No, if your blood must flow, so be it upon your own head," answered Mohammed, earnestly. You alone shall decide your own life or death, and that of your three companions.—Come, soldiers, open this door ; we go out this way."

The soldiers obeyed, and opened the door on that side of the mosque which lay nearest the mountain stairway.

The sheik and the ulemas, soldiers accompanying them, passed out, Mohammed in front of them, his drawn sword in his hand. Behind them came the collectors, with pikes in their hands.

Silently they went on their way toward the mountain-path.

The men who had waited, uncertain what to do, before the door of the mosque, now went round to the side, and with outcries of rage pointed out to one another the road to the mountain-path.

When Mohammed heard this outcry, he stood still, and motioned to the soldiers to go forward with the prisoners. "Remain at my side, collectors, we will cover the rear. Forward, now! go up the mountain."

And while those went upward, Mohammed remained at the foot of the mountain. On either side the collectors, and in front of him all the fishermen of Praousta, more than fifty men, with threatening looks and burning eyes. But still, although they muttered and quarrelled, and even raised their fists, they dared not approach this young man, whose countenance was so determined, so full of energy, whose cheeks were so pale, and on whose mouth rested so threatening an expression. He must have appeared to them like the angel of death, and each one feared that if he approached he would sink down and die.

Mohammed paid no attention to the threatening group of men. His eye looked beyond them—there, behind the men, where the veiled white figure stood, supported by two women.

He looked toward her, and the ringing tones of the young girl's voice sounded in his heart, and he seemed to hear the words: "If you have a mother you love, then think of her!"

He thought of her, and a deep sigh escaped his soul. But, still, he must be a man now. He had sworn to bring the rebels of Praousta back to obedience. He must keep his word, and he will do it. "If she has swooned away, she will awake and forget her grief. Women are readily grieved, but their grief is easily dissipated. She will know how to console herself; and as for me, I will forget her, I will never give her another thought."

He said this defiantly to himself, and looked again at the men of Praousta, who were still standing irresolute and murmuring near the mosque, not daring to approach the three armed men. "He certainly would not have come alone, he would not dare to remain standing there, if his comrades were not concealed somewhere up there in the mountain."

"Yes, they are standing there listening, and, if we shoulp charge upon them, they would fire at us, and we should all be lost. No, we will be cautious; but this is certain, we will not pay the tax; the sheik has commanded it, and the ulemas have decided; therefore we will not pay."

"No, we will not pay," repeated all the other men. No longer loud and defiant, but in low voices one to another, and their eyes turned suspiciously toward the three figures, and then up the mountain-path, toward the rocks behind which they believed the sharp-shooters were concealed.

Mohammed looked also toward the mountain-path, and, seeing that the prisoners and their guard had reached the top of the mountain, he turned toward the fishermen:

"Ismail, Marut, Berutti," he cried, "do you not recognize me, you know Mohammed Ali, son of Ibrahim?"

"Yes, we know you, and we would not have believed that the son of Ibrahim Aga could have become a spy upon his old friends."

"I am not a spy, I am only a servant of that law and justice which you wish to violate. Step nearer, and listen to what I have to say to you."

They came cautiously, hesitatingly, a few steps nearer, and again looked anxiously toward the mountain.

"What have you to say, Mohammed, son of Ibrahim Aga? —but remember that one who—"

"Silence!" commanded Mohammed; "I shall remember what is necessary, and I do not need the advice of rebels and rioters. I did not call upon you to speak, but to listen to what I have to say. Hearken, men of Praousta, in the name of the tschorbadji! I give you until early to-morrow morning to decide; if, at the hour of second prayers, you have not sent three men to the palace of the tschorbadji, double the amount that you have formerly paid, the sheik and the three ulemas will lose their heads for your disobedience, and you will be the murderers of four of the first men of Praousta."

He slightly lowered his gleaming sword, and, as a farewell greeting, turned and walked up the mountain-path, not swiftly, not hastily, as if he feared the men would fall upon him, but slowly, step by step, not even glancing back to see if the crowd were following him, quietly, sword in hand, and in front of him the two collectors.

BOOK II.

PARADISE AND HELL.

CHAPTER I.

THE FLOWER OF PRAOUSTA.

THE tschorbadji was in great uneasiness since Mohammed had gone on his expedition to the rebellious village, and his son was profoundly troubled and apprehensive. He could not endure to remain in the broad hall which led to the garden, but followed his father to the great saloon which commanded a view of the court-yard through which Mohammed must come. He laid himself upon the divan, while his father walked up and down with heavy steps, pausing occasionally at the window looking into the court-yard, and then rapidly continuing his walk. Suddenly the door opened, and two slaves appeared in magnificent Grecian costume, richly embroidered, and placed themselves at the open door. Then a third stepped forth, and announced in a loud voice, "His excellency Cousrouf Pacha!" His excellency entered, splendidly dressed, in a long velvet mantle, trimmed with rare fur, in his turban a star of the most brilliant diamonds flashed, and in the Persian shawl folded around his waist glittered a dagger, studded with costly gems.

It was a splendid sight—the tall, proud man as he stood in the widely-opened door; the richly-dressed slaves at his side, and behind him his secretary, in white, gold-embroidered robe, holding the staff aloft.

The tschorbadji stepped toward him with a respectful air and a forced smile. Osman arose slowly from the divan, and bowed profoundly before his excellency.

The sharp glance of the pacha read at once, in the face of father and son, that he was unwelcome, and told them so in a soft, friendly voice. The tschorbadji protested, in flowery words and flattering terms, which he knew would please Cousrouf Pacha, that he was unutterably happy, inexpressibly flattered and delighted, at the presence of his excellency.

Cousrouf Pacha replied with a gracious inclination of his stately head, and appeared to find it perfectly natural that every one should feel delighted when his excellency approached.

"Tell me, tschorbadji," he said, taking the place of honor on the divan, and motioning the slave to bring him his gold-and-diamond-studded chibouque—"tell me, tschorbadji, is it true that the village of Praousta is in revolt?"

"Unfortunately, your excellency, it is true," sighed the tschorbadji; "the men have revolted, they will not pay the double tax."

"Dogs! dogs! that are barking a little," said Cousrouf, with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders. "I think, tschorbadji, you would do well to quiet them quickly."

"I hope my messenger will succeed in repressing the revolt, in quieting the men, and in inducing them to do their duty."

"What!" exclaimed Cousrouf, with a contemptuous curl of his lip, "you intend to make terms with the rebels?"

"I shall try to induce the men to do their duty."

"You surely do not consider that rebels are criminals most deserving of death," said Cousrouf, with flashing eyes. "Dogs are shot when they are mad, and rebels are but mad dogs."

"I beg your pardon, excellency," said the tschorbadji, his gentle face assuming a severer expression than it had yet worn before his excellency—"I beg your pardon, but this small island is not so rich in men that we can afford to shoot them like dogs, and, moreover, excepting this, the people are good, industrious, and willing to provide for their families. This year they have had a bad harvest, and but little profit, and were incensed at having to pay double taxes."

"And why double taxes?" asked Cousrouf Pacha, with a contemptuous smile.

"Do not ask me, excellency," replied the tschorbadji, with a bow ; " one portion of the taxes goes as usual to Stamboul, into the coffers of his highness ; the other portion—"

" Ah, I understand," said Cousrouf, with a proud smile ; " the other portion is, through an order from Stamboul, destined for me. That is so, is it not, tschorbadji ? "

" Yes, excellency, if you wish to know the truth, it is."

" And these dogs refuse to pay for the benefit of Cousrouf Pacha, the grand-vizier of his highness, the friend and comrade of the Admiral Hussein, and you will not shoot them down like mad dogs, tschorbadji ; you wish to negotiate with these audacious men, who mock at my greatness in refusing me the tribute ! These slaves believe that, because Cousrouf Pacha condescends to live in this desolate place—this miserable nest —they can mock and deny me their respect with impunity. But I tell you, tschorbadji, I tell you, and all the men of Praousta and Cavalla, you shall remember this day ! If these men do not submit, if they do not pay what they ought to pay, then you may all beware, for a day will come, and, by Allah, it is not far off, when Cousrouf Pacha will leave his exile with new honors ! Remember this, tschorbadji, and act accordingly."

" I shall remember it, excellency," said the tschorbadji, respectfully ; " I have never failed in reverence and respect to the noble guest whom his highness graciously sent here ; I accepted it as a favor, and during my entire life I shall remember the days that it pleased Cousrouf Pacha to become a guest in my house."

The words of the tschorbadji, humbly and respectfully as they were spoken, rankled in the sensitive soul of the proud pacha. He started, and his brow darkened. He had partaken of the tschorbadji's hospitality, and had never thanked him for it, and never returned it. The tax that the men of Praousta were commanded to pay, was by an order from Stamboul, destined for Cousrouf Pacha, and this was a sign to the proud man that his sun was in the ascendant, that he would soon be released from his exile, and therefore he was defiant and haughty toward the tschorbadji.

At the angry words of the pacha, Osman, the usually mild and gentle youth, arose from the divan, and placed himself at his father's side, as if he wished to defend the tschorbadji from the proud and mocking words of the stranger.

The father felt and understood what was passing in the youth's soul; he laid his hand softly upon his shoulder. "Calm yourself, my son; may the rights of a guest be as sacred to you as to me—his excellency has been our esteemed guest for three years, remember this, and forget that he was a little hard just now. Allah be with him! Allah make all our hearts tender and gentle!"

"You must remember, pacha, that here, in our small portion of the great world, we cannot make so great and magnificent a display as you can make in your brilliant career in the great city of Stamboul. We have no soldiers here except my small body-guard of eight men; the rest of our small military force is now stationed elsewhere. It would be very unfortunate if I should incite to violence the men who, even if armed with knives only, would still be able to overpower us all. It will therefore be better to negotiate with them than to proceed to extreme measures."

"Well, what course have you decided upon?" asked Cousrouf, in a milder tone.

"Mohammed Ali, the friend of my son, Osman, has pledged himself to bring the rebels to reason; I have given him my body-guard of eight men, and he has gone down to Praousta."

"Gone to this seditious village, where more than fifty strong men are in revolt!" exclaimed Cousrouf. "Truly such daring reflects honor upon the young lad."

"Upon what young lad?" asked Osman, in seeming surprise; "of whom does your excellency speak?"

"Of the young lad your father spoke of; he who volunteered to settle this difficulty. Is he your slave, or your freedman, of whom you make a companion because unfortunately you can find here no better social intercourse?"

"He is my friend," said Osman, in a calm, firm voice, "my best friend, and I trust that all who honor my father's house with their visits will observe a proper respect to the friend of his son. I expect this, and, if need be, will require it, for—"

"Here comes Mohammed!" cried the governor, rejoicing at any occurrence which interrupted his son's speech. "Here comes Mohammed, and with him four prisoners. By Allah! it is the sheik and the three ulemas of Praousta! The soldiers are conducting them; their hands are bound behind their backs. Mohammed is a bold fellow; he has made prisoners of four of the richest and most influential men of the village, and is bringing them here. I must speak with him." The governor arose hastily, but Cousrouf Pacha seized his arm and held him back forcibly. "Tschorbadji, it becomes your ambassador to seek you and give an account of his mission. I myself will hear him." Still holding the tschorbadji's arm, he stepped to the divan, seated himself, and drew the governor down beside him. And now the door was opened, and Mohammed, with glowing cheeks and ardent eyes, holding his sword aloft, entered the room. He advanced rapidly across the spacious saloon to the tschorbadji, lowered his sword before him, and bestowed a kindly glance on his friend Osman, who came forward to greet him. With a few hasty words he explained to the tschorbadji the events which had taken place; only when he spoke of the young girl did his voice falter, but he made slight mention of her, and passed on to narrate the conclusion of his bold adventure.

"So you have really made prisoners of four of the first men of Praousta and brought them here!" said the tschorbadji, completely taken by surprise. "Tell me what shall be done with them? It surely cannot be your intention to put these men to death if the tax is not paid?"

"Most certainly, sir, that is my intention," said Mohammed, throwing back his head proudly. "They are all rebels, and the ulemas and the sheik were their leaders—these, sir, were the men who counselled the people not to pay the taxes. It is according to law that the heads of the leaders of a rebellion should fall, and fall their heads shall, for I have sworn it; if three men are not sent to-morrow morning from Praousta, at the hour of prayer, with the double tax, the heads of the prisoners shall answer for its payment!"

"But this is impossible," said the tschorbadji, whose tender heart was moved by Mohammed's threatening words. "This is impossible; I cannot allow these men to be executed."

"I have sworn it shall be done, and it must be done, unless you wish to see your authority overthrown."

"But how can it be done?" exclaimed the tschorbadji, pale with anxiety and horror. "Who will put these men to death? I have no executioner."

"If necessary," said Mohammed, his eyes flashing with resolve—"If necessary, I will behead them myself."

"Bravely said!" cried Cousrouf Pacha, rising from his seat. "Truly, Mohammed Ali, I begin to be pleased with you."

"That, sir, is more than I desire," said Mohammed, calmly; he gave one threatening glance at the proud pacha, and then turned quickly to the tschorbadji.

"Remember, sir, that you gave me absolute authority to act as I thought best. I gave you my word of honor to bring back these rebels to reason and obedience. In return, you promised that I alone should decide the matter. It must therefore be so. I have sworn to the men of Praousta that, unless they submit, the heads of the sheik and the three ulemas shall fall; and I repeat, so must it be, even if they fall by my hand, if to-morrow, at the hour of prayer, the gold is not produced."

"Then may Allah mercifully bring the rebels to repentance!" sighed the tschorbadji. "May they submit to your decision, and bring the gold at the appointed time. Until then we must put the prisoners in some place of safety. Give orders, Mohammed, that they be taken to the prison, and carefully guarded."

"And why to the prison, sir?" asked Mohammed, quietly. "Here in the middle of the court-yard is a space encircled with an iron railing."

"So there is," replied the tschorbadji, "it was prepared as a cage for my beautiful lion, and he had lived within that railing for four years, when some miserable wretch, who knew I loved the noble animal, poisoned it."

"Well, I think the cage your lion occupied is large enough to afford lodging for one night to the sheik and the ulemas."

"What! confine them here in the open air?"

"Yes, sir, that is what I suggest. "Cannot the iron door be locked?"

"Yes, it can be locked; the key is in the palace."

"In this way we can spare your body-guard a weary watch," said Mohammed. "I will conduct them to their prison. It seems to me best that the prisoners be placed where all the world can see them; all the passers-by can here look upon these men and take warning how the tschorbadji punishes rebels and rebellions. I alone will keep watch over these prisoners, and explain to all who pass why they are here; they will then go down to Praousta, and announce that the block is prepared upon which the heads of these men will fall early on the morrow, unless the taxes are paid."

Mohammed, you are terrible!" murmured Osman, as he gazed with amazement and anxiety into the eyes of his friend.

"You are right," whispered Cousrouf Pacha, aside; "this is a bold, brave youth, and something can be made of him. He is ambitious and daring. The time may come when he would be of use; I will try to win him over to my interests."

Mohammed heard nothing more; he had already gone to the court-yard and opened the door of the cage. He now ordered the soldiers to conduct the prisoners inside the enclosure.

Calmly and silently they entered. Not one word had been uttered by them since they left Praousta; with heads erect, and with proud bearing, they entered their prison.

"Force conquers even the philosopher. He who feels himself in the right is silent, and utters no complaint," so exclaimed the sheik in a loud voice, as he was thrust inside the enclosure by the soldiers. The ulemas bowed their heads and followed him. "Allah be praised, and may the prophet look down in mercy upon the most insignificant of his creatures!"

The door of their prison closed behind them; Mohammed took the key and concealed it about his person. "Now," said he, "pray and meditate upon your crimes and their punishment. I will myself make known to the men of Praousta that they may find you here, and all who wish can come to see you. It rests with you to tell the people that they must submit to the law, or else bring your heads to the block. Think well of this, and rest assured the tschorbadji will confirm what he has declared through me. To-morrow, at the hour of prayer, must the double tax be paid by the men of Praousta, or your heads shall be placed on the cliffs where everybody can see them, and your bodies thrown upon the rock Bucephalus, that the vultures and ravens may feed upon them."

CHAPTER II.

MASA.

THE sea lay like a sleeping lion reposing after a conflict, and curled its waves dreamily upon the mountain-rock Bucephalus. The sun was burning hot, and no breath of air cooled the atmosphere, and not one cloud or shadow afforded protection from the glowing rays of the sun, which fell full upon the uncovered space within which the sheik and the ulemas had been confined since early in the morning. But they stood firm, and no complaint escaped their lips. With their heads turned to the east, they knelt and prayed, their whole bearing expressing dignity and high resolve.

At the command of Mohammed, one of the governor's collectors was sent to Praousta. He was instructed to place himself in front of the mosque, call the people together by the sound of the tomtom, and announce to them, in the name of the tschorbadji, that all who would see the victims of their rebellion should come up the mountain, but without arms, and only three at a time. They should be allowed to enter the court-yard of the palace, where they could see that the prisoners were still alive, and that their lives and liberty rested solely with the men of Praousta. In conformity with this proclamation, the men of the village came up to the palace in threes.

Above, upon the rock, knelt a young girl, closely veiled. The men of Praousta knew well that this was Masa, the sheik's daughter. They bowed low before her, and greeted her with the greeting of peace. She raised her trembling hands toward them, exclaiming: "Have pity on my unhappy father! Submit to the law! Yield to necessity! O save my father, and do not make me an orphan!"

The men of Praousta made no reply; they bowed their heads silently, and passed on, with clouded countenances, to the iron cage in which the governor's lion had once been confined, and where now stood the sheik and the ulemas, thus made wild beasts of; they, the best and wisest men of Praousta, the representatives of the people, made a public spectacle!

The sheik and the ulemas beckoned to each man who passed, and besought him to hold fast to his resolution not to pay the new tax. "If you yield now, and pay twofold, soon they will demand threefold; they wish to impoverish us and exact our heart's blood, but we will not submit, and we command you to stand firm!"

"But you, O fathers of our community, what will be your fate?"

"That Allah has determined," replied one of the ulemas. "Not a bird falls to the ground, not a worm is crushed, by the careless foot of man, without his knowledge. He who protects the spiders in the trees and in the corners of the rooms, the birds of the air, and the monsters of the deep, will also care for us. Allah be praised!"

"Allah be praised!" echoed the men, as they turned their steps toward Praousta.

The maiden still knelt upon the rocky stairway and raised her hands in wild entreaty to the passers-by. "Yield, yield, I implore you! Do not deliver over your wisest and best men to a bloody death!"

Mohammed stood in the hall, behind a pillar, listening earnestly to the words spoken by the prisoners to the men of the village. From time to time Osman joined him, and begged him not to act the part of guard over the prisoners, but to come into the saloon and rest upon the divan. "They can not escape; the railing is high, and the gate securely locked. Come, grant me the pleasure of your company, and let me seek to soften your heart, and incline you to mercy."

"Impossible," said Mohammed, sternly. "If we yield now, the tschorbadji's authority is forever lost."

"But," said the tschorbadji, who joined them at that moment, "what is to come of all this, if the prisoners do not submit?"

"Their heads shall fall upon the block to-morrow morning, at the hour of prayer," said Mohammed, in so firm and clear a voice that his words were heard by Cousrouf Pacha, who had just entered the hall.

"He is right, tschorbadji," said he, bowing his head with great dignity. "Yes, he is right! If the rabble are rebellious, let the heads of some of them fall! Order and law must reign! Many-headed is the hydra, and it is no great misfortune if a few of their brawling heads are hewn off!"

"Allah is great! His will be done," said the tschorbadji. "I do not wish the court-yard of my dwelling to be stained with blood. I do not wish to rule harshly and unmercifully in the evening of my life, after governing my people so many years by mild and gentle rule."

"There you are wrong," said Cousrouf Pacha; "mildness and gentleness do not become a ruler; only by severity and an unbending will can he exalt himself to power, and, even when he reaches the goal, he must trust to arms, if he is to maintain himself."

"And if with sword and dagger he reaches the throne," said Osman, looking gently and reproachfully at the proud pacha, "may he then hope to hear music and hymns of praise, or must he not then only expect to hear cries of anguish uttered by those over whose heads he strode to power? He could not then expect to see a fair and blooming land, but a land full of corpses and blood! No, no, Cousrouf Pacha! I desire not to reach that height. I will rather dwell in the valleys—in the shadow of the cliffs on the sea shore—and gather shells, and revel in the gladness and delight of a modest and quiet existence."

"And you, Mohammed," said the pacha, smiling scornfully, "what is your ambition? Will you gather shells upon the sea-shore with Osman, or will you climb the heights with me to a splendid goal?"

Mohammed turned his eyes entirely away from the pacha, nodded to his friend Osman, and said: "I will tread my own path alone. Where fate will lead me I know not. I seek no companionship, and will follow no man's lead. From time to time, I may turn aside from my path, and wander, with joy and gladness, with my only friend, on the sea-shore, and seek for shells, and revel in the delights of a modest and quiet life."

With a kindly glance, Osman extended his hand, as if in a grateful greeting.

The men of Praousta continued to pass before the iron cage, and the sheik still appealed to them to be firm, and not to sacrifice their rights.

Suddenly the sun disappeared, and night came down upon the earth. The prisoners said their evening prayers in a loud voice, and when, from the minarets of Praousta, the call of the *muredin* rang out on the air, the prisoners commenced singing, firmly and devoutly: "God is great! There is no God but our God, and Mohammed is his prophet! Come to prayer! Come to be healed! God is just! There is no God but our God!" And from the village of Praousta the solemn hymn was echoed back: "God is just! There is no God but our God!" Then all was silent, and the night, like a silver veil, wrapped the earth in its folds.

In the house of the tschorbadji all was still; it was the custom to retire early and to rise with the sun. God, in His goodness, created the night for repose. The moon is a sacred lantern, which God hangs over a sleeping world, and the stars are the eyes of the guardian angels watching over the helpless sleepers. Therefore, is it well to go to rest with the setting sun.

Profound silence reigned in Cavalla, in the palace of the governor, and in the village of Praousta the men were at the mosque, praying that Allah would vouchsafe them wisdom for the duties of the coming day. To the slender female kneeling in the mosque they whispered: "Soften your father's heart, maiden, and beseech him to allow us to obey this hard command."

Did she understand? Was there comfort or encouragement in these words? She bowed her head still lower, and sobbed beneath her veil ; she knew too well her father's immovable will, and that he preferred death to submission.

The court-yard was quiet. The tschorbadji had offered to place two sentinels before the gate of the enclosure, but Mohammed declined the offer. "I alone must complete that which I alone began. I pledged you my honor, tschorbadji, that I would subdue this rebellion, and I alone will guard the prisoners. I will trust no man but myself. Who knows but that the men of Praousta may try to storm the enclosure? They are crafty and deceitful. I know them well, and will myself guard the prisoners."

"Allow, at least, some of the soldiers to relieve you during the night in this hard service."

"No service which honor and duty require is hard," said Mohammed, proudly. "Let the soldiers sleep, I will keep watch."

Osman gave him a long and searching look, as if he would read the purpose of his soul ; and, strange to say, Mohammed turned his face aside to avoid his friend's keen eye. Was it only from a sense of honor and duty that Mohammed undertook the lonely watch? Or did he hope the clear moonlight would reveal some other beautiful picture than the golden plateau, and the great shadows thrown upon it by the palace? When night had fully settled down upon the earth, Mohammed crept forward in the shadow of the palace, to a large rock which stood at the entrance of the court-yard ; there he concealed himself, and waited. What was he waiting for? From that point he could overlook the court-yard, and, by leaning forward, he could also see the stairway in the rock. Why did he turn his head in that direction so often? Why did he suddenly shrink back, and why did his heart tremble as he saw a white figure, illuminated by the moon, advancing? Mohammed cowered still lower behind the rock.

Probably she did not see him, and supposed the moon and the stars only had seen her glide softly through the gateway, and into the court-yard.

The veiled virgin now walks through the court-yard to the iron railing ; kneels down upon the mosaic pavement, and, raising her hands, whispers softly :

"Father, my beloved father, do you hear your daughter's voice?" Mohammed bows his head, and listens in breathless suspense, his heart throbbing wildly.

"I hear you, my daughter," replied the sheik, in a quiet tone. "I expected you, for I know my Masa's heart well."

"Masa," murmured Mohammed; "what a beautiful, glorious name! It falls like music upon my ear, and makes my heart beat strangely. What does this mean? Allah, protect thy servant!"

Against his will, he still listens to this heavenly voice that now entreats her father to yield, to submit to the inevitable. But the sheik, as she continued her supplications, commanded silence, and forbade her to burden his heart with her tears.

"Life, my daughter, is but a short span; but eternity is long, and woe to those who have not done their duty during that short period! They will suffer for it throughout eternity, for Allah is strong in his wrath, and just in his punishment. I have sworn that I will watch over the welfare of my community while I live, and Sheik Alepp will keep his word to the end of his life."

"But, father, beloved father!" urged the maiden, "you have also sworn to be a parent and a guardian to me all the days of your life. Keep this oath, too; save your life, in order to save mine. Then you must know, my father, that Masa will not remain on the earth if you leave it. Your child has naught upon this earth but you; early was my mother taken, and it has become lonely in Sheik Alepp's harem. My father said: 'I will not take in a strange woman: no second wife shall ever fill the place in my heart that has been wholly consecrated to my dear Masa. My only child shall not have to suffer from the severity and caprice of a strange woman.' This was nobly said and nobly done, my father, to devote your entire life to your child, and to the duties of guardian of your people. But hear me, father: what is to become of your daughter when she is left alone upon the earth? Sorrow and want will be my portion, and I should wither away unseen, and be trodden under foot upon the wayside, without one sympathizing voice to bemoan my early death."

Mohammed still crouched within the shadow of the cliff, his eyes sparkling like the stars in heaven, but the maiden saw them not, nor could she know the exultation in his heart.

"You should not wither away unseen and unlamented upon the wayside. I would draw you to my bosom, and there you should bloom in fragrance, my heavenly blossom, and my whole life would lament over you if you should leave the earth."

In the silence of the night the youth still listened to the conversation between father and daughter—to the tender entreaties of the maiden, to the father's stern and earnest words; he heard also the whispering voices of the ulemas, who, awakened by the conversation, betook themselves to repeating prayers, in order that they might not hear what passed between father and daughter at this solemn moment.

Now Masa ceased speaking; a few stifled sobs, a few trembling words only, could be distinguished. But the sheik remained firm and unyielding.

"I cannot, Masa. Right gladly would I remain and live with you, and gladden my eyes with your lovely countenance, gladly would I still continue to hear the voice that calls to me in the loved tones of my Aga, and is to my ear the sweetest music, but the claims of duty are paramount, and what duty commands man must perform. Allah so wills it. Allah be praised! The sheik cannot counsel his people to yield to force; he must wait patiently in the path of his duty. The result is in Allah's hand, and Allah is great and mighty. Allah il Allah!"

"Allah il Allah!" repeated the three ulemas.

Rising from his knees, the sheik now proceeded to give, with a loud voice, the second call, the *ebed*, for he saw that rosy streaks were beginning to shoot out over the horizon, and he knew that the sun would rise from out the sea in an hour; it was therefore time to pronounce the ebed.

"I praise the perfection of God who endures for ever and ever, the perfection of the living, the only and the highest God. The perfection of the God who, in his great kingdom, takes unto himself neither wife, nor an associate, nor one who resembles him, nor one who is disobedient, nor a substitute, nor an equal, nor a descendant—his perfection I praise; and praised be his name! He is a God who knew what was to be, before it became what it is, and what has been; and he is as he was in the beginning. His perfection I praise, and praised be his name; he is a God without equal. There is no one who is equal to the good God; there is no one who is equal to the great God; there is no God beside thee, O God, whom we must adore, praise, desire, and glorify! I praise the perfection of him who has made all creatures, who preserves and provides them with food, and has determined the end of the lives of his servants. O God, the good, the gracious, the great, forget not one of them."

The ulemas now arose, and with powerful voices began the following monotonous chant:

"I praise the perfection of Him who by his power and greatness causes pure water to flow from the solid rock; the perfection of Him who spoke to our master, Moses, on the mountain, whereupon the mountain crumbled to dust out of fear of God, whose name be praised as the one and the only one. There is no God but God, and he is a righteous judge. I praise the justice of the first, peace and comfort be with you; and you of the friendly countenance, O ambassador of God, peace be with you, and with your family and companions. O you prophet! God is great, and God favors, and preserves, and glorifies the great prophet Mohammed. And may God, whose name be blessed and praised, be pleased with you, O Mohammed, and with all those favored with the wine of God! Amen!" *

"Amen! Amen! Amen!" repeated the ulemas, and the maiden whispered it after them. And, within the shadow of the cliff, Mohammed Ali, who had reverently repeated the ebed in a low voice, murmured Amen.

"And now, my daughter," said the sheik, in a loud voice, "I command you to go down to Praousta, and to conceal yourself within the harem of my house, and there to await in patience and submission, as beseems a woman, the events of the morrow, the day of the Lord and of the judgment. Go, my child, and the blessing of Allah be with you!"

Mohammed looked forth from behind the cliff, and beheld

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* See the Koran.

the veiled figure bending down and grasping the old man's hand through the bars of the cage; he then heard the father's parting blessing, and his daughter's low sobs.

Now she arose, and, bathed in the full lustre of the moon, glided softly through the court-yard. She seemed to him like one of the *welis*, or spirits blessed of God, as she swept past the cliff behind which Mohammed stood, and passed with inaudible footsteps toward the rocky stairway.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST DAY OF CREATION.

NOISELESSLY, her feet scarcely touching the ground, the veiled figure swept onward. The light of the moon enveloped her as with a silver veil, and the stars gazed at her wonderingly, as if to follow with their eyes the lovely being who walks on in solitude through the darkness of night.

She did not fear the solitude, for the welis guarded the innocent maiden, and kept from her the evil spirits and ghins.

The solitude had no terrors for her, but she shrank back with alarm when the moon suddenly cast a long shadow across her pathway.

The shadow of a man! She stood still for a moment in a listening attitude.

"Allah protect me!" she murmured, as she drew her veil more closely about her and walked on.

She had almost reached the stairway when the shadow came close to her side, and a hand was laid on her shoulder.

"Stay, Masa," whispered a voice.

She trembled and sought to walk on, but her feet seemed chained to the ground. She thought the ghins were detaining her, and she prayed to Allah from her inmost soul to release her from their dread enchantment.

"Fear me not, Masa," said a kindly voice; "listen to me. I am no enemy."

"I do not fear you," said she, in low, faint tones. "I fear neither man nor the evil ghins, for the welis guard me, and my mother's eyes watch over me. Allah, too, is always with me wherever I go, by night or day. Yet I know that you are my enemy, because you are my father's enemy."

"Oh, do not say this ! Your words pierce my heart."

"But yet you are my enemy, for you are my father's enemy ; I know you, I recognize the fierce youth who took my father prisoner at the mosque this morning. It was you ! I know you well, and my heart is breaking. You are the author of my father's misery. You do evil, and evil thoughts fill your heart. Let me pass, do not detain me ! Let me return to my father's house. Masa must obey her father and master. Remove your hand from my shoulder. It does not beseem a stranger to touch a chaste maiden with his impure hand. Let me pass."

"You say I am your enemy, your father's enemy. Believe me, Masa, I am not your enemy, not your father's enemy. An evil destiny has ordained that Mohammed Ali should be the instrument, the sword of justice, that he should grieve and wound her he would so gladly shield. The evil ghins have also ordained that I should carry out the law and assume a threatening attitude toward your father. I must submit to what Allah ordains, and proceed in the line of my duty. But, Masa, you shall know that I am neither yours nor your father's enemy. You must know that I would shed my heart's blood to make undone that which I have commenced. O Masa, had I sooner beheld these eyes, that now look upon me with the brilliancy of the stars in heaven, had I sooner beheld the countenance that now beams upon me with the brightness of the young day, never would my mother's son have assumed a threatening attitude toward your father, never would Mohammed have undertaken to enforce the law against him. True, the evil ghins have brought this about, but hearken to me, Masa, and consider well that your father's welfare is at stake."

"I will not hear you," said she, tremblingly.

"I swear, by the spirit of my mother, that I have nothing to conceal before Allah and the prophet. Do not wound me, Masa, with your alarm. You seemed to me this morning the loveliest of women ; until then Sitta Chadra was her son's only love. You must know that when she had died, Mohammed Ali fled into solitude and intended to take his own life. But in the solitude, Allah said to him : 'The life I have given you, bear with manfully, and take upon yourself the sufferings I see fit to visit upon you.'

"I bowed submissively to his commands ; I left my solitude and raised myself by my sorrow as by a pillar. But in you I seemed to see my mother's spirit ; then pain vanished from my heart, and my mother seemed to be regarding me through your eyes. Therefore, Masa, have I followed you. I have come to say that which brings the blush to my inmost soul, that which the ear of no other human being shall ever hear. In the name of my mother, I beseech you, do not let it be here upon this open path where men may pass, and which the foot of man has desecrated. In the name of the mother you love so well as you this morning declared in the mosque, and in the name of my mother whom I have loved as few sons have loved their mothers, in the name of the moon, and in the name of the golden stars that glitter above us, I entreat you, mount with me to the summit of the rock. There will Mohammed speak words to you that his tongue has never uttered before. There he will advise you how to save your father, and help the men of Praousta."

She looked up to the crest of the rock, bathed in the soft moonlight.

"You would lead me up there ?" murmured she.

"I will lead you safely, or follow you, as the slave follows his mistress. The way is steep, but your feet are active as those of the gazelle. I now remember having sometimes observed your white figure and your flying footstep. Lightly like the dove have I seen you flit from rock to rock, and I have followed you with reverence. Yes, I have long known you ; I have often see you, and I know that the white dove need only spread her wings to flutter up to the Ear of Bucephalus. O Masa, I entreat you, spread your wings and fly ! There I will speak with you of your father and of the future, of yours and of mine. Will you grant my request ?"

She did not reply, but only regarded him with an inquiring, doubtful look.

Was it a mere accident, or had he purposely placed himself so that the light of the now waning moon shone full in his face? Was it by chance that he was so placed that a shadow was thrown over the place where she stood, which enabled her to gaze at him from out the darkness with her large, luminous eyes?

"I entreat you, Masa, go not down to your father's house, but ascend with me to the Ear of Bucephalus. There, where none but Allah and Nature can hear my words, I will speak to you of your father, and of the men of the village."

She drew her veil more closely about her and bowed her head. "Lead the way, Mohammed Ali, and I will follow."

And he, overwhelmed with happiness, knelt down and tenderly kissed the little foot that peeped out from beneath her white garments. Then he arose, folded his arms upon his breast, and bowed his head in reverence before his queen.

"Your slave will lead the way," said he, softly; "be merciful, and follow him."

He then turned and began the ascent of the path that leads up to the crest of the rock. Masa followed, praying to herself that her mother's spirit might accompany and guard her from all danger.

Both were silent; Mohammed hastened on from rock to rock, higher and higher.

Mohammed was right. Masa fluttered lightly from cliff to cliff like a white dove.

At times he stood still and looked behind him.

It perhaps occurred to him that he was walking too rapidly, and should give her time to rest. Or he feared, perhaps, the heavenly form might suddenly vanish like the vision of a dream.

"See," said he. pointing to the moon now waxing pale in the heavens. "See, the night is drawing to a close, and day is about to break. I wish to see the sun rise with you, O Masa!"

"I, too, desire it," was whispered in her heart, but her lips did not utter the words. "Lead the way, I follow you."

The whispering of the lips was to him as the command of a sovereign ; he quickly turned and continued the ascent.

They had now reached the crest. And there, high above all earthly care and sorrow, the two, the youth and maiden stood, alone upon the lofty plateau.

They stood upon the spot of which Mohammed had said that it was not yet desecrated by the foot of man. Here it was lonely and solemn ; here Allah and holy Nature could alone hear his words. And now, overcome by the wondrous picture that lay spread out before them, and perhaps unconsciously, Mohammed took the girl's hand ; and, without being conscious of it, she allowed him to take it in his own and pass it to his lips.

The moon had vanished beneath the horizon, and there, where heaven and earth seemed united in sweet harmony, a purple hue, like a messenger from God, gradually overspread the sky. Who could tell where the earth ended and the heavens began ; where the waves ceased to murmur, and were commingled with the skies in Godlike majesty and love? Little purple clouds chased each other across the heavens like flying cupids, and here and there a star still faintly sparkling as if to tell of the Divine mysteries of creation.

And now the waters of the sea suddenly begin to swell, and the waves roll higher ; they rear their white crests aloft, and a whispering pervades the air, as though the spirits of heaven and earth were pronouncing the morning prayer of the new day.

Upon the crest of the rock stand these two human beings, regarding the fading stars and the rising sun, hand-in-hand—they, too, a part of the holy universe created by Allah in the fulness of his grace. And their souls and hearts are as innocent as were those of the first human pair in paradise, before the alluring voice of the serpent had yet been heard. The light of day still shines, as through a veil, but a rosy hue gradually overspreads the heavens, and, at last, the sun rises, in all its splendor from out the sea, as on the first morning of creation, and on each succeeding morning since, comes this holy, ever-renewed mystery of the sunrise, that tells of the surpassing glory of God. A wondrous murmuring rises up from the sea, and the birds are all awake, exulting in the brightness of the morning. The palm, the olive, and the myrtle groves, rustle in the breeze. The lark soars heavenward, singing its morning greeting. Even the eagle has spread his pinions, and is mounting aloft from his nest in the neighboring rocks, to do homage to the sun. It is as though all Nature were crying, exultingly, " The new day has awakened ! "

" The sun has risen, Masa," cried Mohammed—" the night is past. As often as I have wandered among these rocks, never before has morning seemed so fair—never before have the sun's rays so filled my heart with warmth. Heretofore, the sunrise was but the signal for me to go in pursuit of game, or to prepare to cross over to Imbro, to look after the fishermen's nets, set out the day before. But to-day Allah proclaims to me why it is that the sunlight is so glorious, that the eagle soars so proudly aloft, that the waves surge so grandly. O Masa, I will tell you why it is thus : it is because they are all imbued with the spirit of creation, and this spirit is love—eternal, illimitable love."

" Speak not thus," said the maiden, tremblingly. " Speak not thus to me. It does not beseem a maiden to listen to a man's words of love without the approval of her father."

" But will you not accord me this privilege, Masa ? " asked he, gently. " May I not go to your father and entreat him to give me the pure maiden, that she may accompany me through day and night ? "

" No, do not speak thus," she repeated, tremblingly. " You told me you would speak of my father—speak of him, Mohammed Ali."

" Yes, of your father," murmured he. " I had so much, so very much to say to you, and now it seems to me that all is already said. What remains is as nothing, and is forgotten."

" You are mocking me," said she, gently. " You only wished to see if my father's daughter would be foolish enough to follow you where she should never go except at her father's side, or accompanied by women. You have punished me, Mohammed, for my folly and boldness in following you and confiding in you. If you have nothing to say to me, then let me quickly go and return to my father's house."

"No, Masa, do not go. I did not intend to mock you; I really had so much to say to you! Yet I know not how it is with me; it seems to me that if I have been transformed, created anew; that yesterday and its events are forgotten. I am as a new, a different being."

He could not hear the voice that whispered in her heart also, that the dawn of a new day had cast its spell over them both.

"Oh, speak to me of my father," she cried, in anxious tones.

"Yes, I will; I will call reason to my aid. Your father is my prisoner, and I have sworn that I would bring the rebels back to submission, and honor requires that I should finish what I have undertaken. I now deplore it in my inmost soul, now that the magic of your eyes has transformed me, and made of the fierce combatant a man who longs to fall at your feet, and pour out his heart's agony and bliss. And yet I cannot undo what I have begun. I registered an oath in the presence of the men of Praousta, and told them: 'If you do not on the morrow comply with what I have commanded, in the name of the tschorbadji, I shall behead the prisoners that Allah has delivered into my hands!'"

"O my father!" cried Masa, loudly, in tones of anguish.

"I cannot do otherwise," said Mohammed, heaving a deep sigh. "I have pledged my honor that it should be so. I cannot recall my oath. But I can die, and die I will; no other resource is left me. I must choose between your father's death and mine. I cannot live dishonored and perjured. The tschorbadji can then release the prisoners; and he will do so, for he is kindly disposed, and it was I alone who wished to proceed with severity. And Osman will join you in your entreaties to his father. Now all is clear; now I know what it was I wished to say to you here on Bucephalus. Ah, still so much, and there is but an hour left me! How often have I gazed, from this place, at the heavens above, and the sea beneath; how often seen the sun rise in its splendor! But now that I have gazed in your eyes, Masa, all else is forgotten and extinguished, and for me there exists only the present; no longer a past. Yet I wished to see you once more before my death, and, I entreat you, grant me one request. My mother, Sitta Khadra, once told me that when a man was about to die, Allah's holy spirit is shed upon him, and the best and purest of all the welis is sent down to the dying, that a heavenly atmosphere may surround him even here on earth. It seems to me that you are the weli sent by Allah to him who is about to die. Therefore, remove your veil, that I may behold the brightness of your eyes and the crimson of your lips, and refresh my soul in the light of your countenance. Yes, die I must, and die I will, when I shall have seen the brightness of your eyes!"

"Look at me," said she, softly, "and hear what I have to say; I will not have you die! There must be some other means of saving my father. But you shall not die, for you—"

She spoke no further, but gazed dreamily upward at the heavens.

The sun had risen higher, and now gilded with its rays the crest of the rock. Its golden light illumined the maiden's unveiled countenance, and Mohammed regarded her in ecstasy. Beautiful was she, and faultless; the eternal morning of youth shone in the features that were still more gloriously illumined by the lustre of first love. She seemed to Mohammed the very embodiment of loveliness, chastity, and innocence. In his ecstasy he could find no utterance for that which filled his heart. His whole being, his whole soul, was reflected in his eyes. He lost all control over himself in the presence of this maiden, this heavenly image.

"Love is my prayer, and prayer is my love. Look at me, ye starlike eyes, and read in my soul what is written there in characters of living flame. 'I love you, I love you!' It is thus my heart speaks to you, and thus will it speak with my last breath. What I now feel is love and death combined, heavenly bliss commingling with boundless suffering; I would weep, and yet shout for joy."

Suddenly, Mohammed bounded to his feet, clasped the maiden in his arms, and imprinted a kiss on her lips, a kiss that made her tremble in her inmost being. For a moment, she allowed her head to rest on his shoulder; she then gently released herself from his embrace, drew her veil down over her face, and turned to go.

"Oh, hear me, Masa, and do not be angry!" he cried, entreatingly. "Allah has seen us, and now hears my vow of fidelity. You say I shall live. Then say, too, that I may live for you! I swear to you that I have loved no woman but you, that no other woman shall ever dwell in my harem. Oh, speak, will you be mine, will you love me, and be true to me?"

He paused, and awaited an answer, he waited long, but no answer came. It seemed to him that, with him, all Nature was awaiting an answer. The foliage of the trees ceased rustling, the songs of the birds were hushed, the eagle folded his pinions in the nest to which he had just returned, and gazed fixedly at the sun. The waves subdued their murmurings, and even the wind held its breath; all Nature was mute, and yet no answer came from the maiden's pure lips.

"O Masa, will you be true to me, will you love me, will you one day come with me to my home?" urged the youth in tones of passionate entreaty.

Her lips parted, and, in low, soft tones, like spirit-whisperings, she murmured, "Yes, I love you, and will be true to you."

He hears her, and bows down, and kisses the hem of her veil.

Sacred is the woman of a man's first love; sacred is the moment when he avows to her his love; sacred is the moment when he dares, for the first time, to approach and touch her.

But suddenly an emotion of horror thrills his whole being.

"O Masa, in my ecstasy, I forgot that I have come here to die, because I cannot live unless my honor is vindicated."

"To die?" said the maiden, with a gentle smile. "Why die now, when we have only just begun to live?"

"I must die that your father may live. I have already told you, Masa, that I have sworn by my honor, that the men of Praousta shall pay the double tax, as they are in duty bound to do. I have pledged my honor, that is, my life. Your father will not pay, and I have sworn by Allah and the prophets that the heads of the four prisoners shall fall if the double tax is not paid. You see now that I must die, that my honor may not suffer. When I am dead you can all settle the matter as you think best; the governor may then show mercy, and relieve them of the tax. But I cannot. And yet I cannot allow Masa's father to die, for Masa would weep for him, and her every tear would accuse me."

"You shall not die, Mohammed," murmured the maiden. "No, you shall not die. O Mohammed, listen to my words. I conjure you, do not be cruel. You say I should weep if you killed my father; but do you not suppose that Masa's eyes would also shed tears if her father should rob her of your life?"

"O Masa!" exclaimed Mohammed, in tones of ecstasy, as he extended his arms toward her.

She stepped back, and gently motioned to him not to touch her.

"Let us demean ourselves as we are commanded, as is becoming before Allah, the prophets, and the good spirits who hover about us; as is becoming in the presence of your mother, and of mine, who are looking down upon us; as a youth and maiden should who have not yet been united in the mosque. Do not touch me, but listen to what Masa has to say: You shall not die for my sake; you shall not fill my eyes with tears, and my soul with anguish. You shall live, Mohammed, that my whole existence may be yours, and yours mine! Let us think and dream of this; let us hope for this, and let us do all we can to make of this dream reality, and of this hope fulfilment. I shall go down to Praousta. I shall speak to them, and conjure them to pay this double tax in spite of my father's opposition. When they shall have done this, Mohammed, your honor will be saved, my father's life preserved, and his daughter's heart freed from anguish. The rest, Mohammed, we must leave to the good spirits, to the welis and the intercession of our mothers."

"But if the men should still refuse," said Mohammed—"and I know they will," he added, gloomily.

"They will not refuse. My lips will possess a charm to persuade them to do what we wish. They will not refuse. My love and anxiety for my father will give to my words such power that they must do, although with reluctance, what the daughter demands of them to save the father's life. I conjure you, Mohammed, wait patiently at least until the hour of second prayer. Prolong the time until then. Allow me to announce this to them; to bear a message to them from my father and from you; allow me to say: 'Mohammed will wait until the hour of second prayer; you can deliberate until then, and not until then, if it be necessary to pay the tax. Yet if, when the hour arrives, you do not appear, my father's life is lost, and you will be his murderers.' I will speak to them thus, and will entreat them with tears, and believe me, these men are good at heart, and full of tenderness and mercy. They, too, dearly love my father, the sheik, and they also love the ulemas, the wise men of the place, and they will surely yield to my entreaties if you will only wait, Mohammed."

As she finished speaking, she turned the gaze of her glowing eyes full upon him. He looked into the depths of these eyes, and a sweet tremor coursed through his whole soul.

"See how great is your power over me, Masa. Mohammed lays his honor, his pledged word, at your feet, and does what you request: I will wait until the hour of the second prayer. May Allah give strength to your words, and bless the charm of your crimson lips with success! I will wait. But one thing, Masa, tell me now, before you go."

"What is it?" asked she. But she seemed to know already, for she blushingly averted her eyes.

"Tell me that you love me, then I will wait. Tell me, Masa, do you love me?"

"How can I tell you what I do not understand?" murmured she. "I do not know what love is."

"You do not know what love is?" said he, gazing at her fixedly and almost threateningly. "Then tell me this, Masa, do you know that I love you?"

When he uttered these words his face was so near hers that she felt his breath on her cheeks—so near, that his eyes looked into the depths of her own and saw themselves reflected there.

"Do you know that I love you?"

A slight tremor possessed itself of all her being, and she bowed her head in confusion.

"Yes, Mohammed, I know that you love me."

He suddenly raised the white veil from her countenance, and softly and gently kissed her lips, as softly and gently as the bee touches with its wings the crimson rose in search of its sweetness. He then quickly let fall her veil again. "Swear, Masa, that no other man's hand shall ever raise this veil!"

"O Mohammed, how can I?" said she, in soft, pleading tones. "Am I not my father's slave, is not his daughter's life in his hands, must I not do what he commands? But this I can swear: that I will love you, Mohammed, that I will pray to Allah to bless our love. And now let me tell you, I not only know that you love me, but I also know that Masa's heart is yours, for it beats so loudly, so stormily, and I feel so happy. This I can swear, too, Mohammed, that my heart will remain true to you, and that I will rather die, than of my own free will allow another man to raise my veil."

"And this I can swear, Masa, that you shall not die," said, he, and his voice sounded almost harsh and threatening. "No, you shall not die, Masa! You shall live, and live for me, the husband of your future. And now, come, I will conduct you to the rocky stairway. This you will permit me to do."

She gently shook her head, raised her hand, and pointed to the landscape that lay spread out below in the bright sunshine.

"No, Mohammed! You called me a white dove. Then let the white dove fly away on its mission. You would not be the huntsman that takes its life? See, beneath us lies Cavalla, where people are now beginning to move about. The eyes of gossips might see me, and the sharp tongues of calumny defame my father's daughter. That may not be, for the sake of my good name, and for your sake too, Mohammed. Let me go down alone, and you remain until you see me descending the stairway. Do not go down until then. Do not give evil tongues occasion to suspect and speak ill of me. Let the white dove that is to wing her flight, when it pleases Allah, to the nest you have prepared for her, be pure and without reproach. Do not speak one more word, and do not look at me—only see how weak I am: if you look at me again I shall stand still and wait till you command me to go. Turn away from me and let me go. Let us both pray to Allah that our wishes may be granted."

He turns away as she requested, and gazes in the opposite direction, at the blue sky and the foaming sea. He sees her not, but the pain he feels tells him Masa is leaving; he knows, without hearing her footsteps, that she is walking from him. He remains above as she had requested. After a while he turns around and looks after her. He sees the white dove fluttering downward from rock to rock, and at last disappear on the stairway that leads to Praousta.

"May Allah bless her mission, that I may live, live for Masa, for her I love so passionately! All that I do shall henceforth be for her, and Mohammed's life will be bliss and sunshine."

CHAPTER IV.

MASA'S JEWELRY.

THE village of Praousta had now assumed a busy look. The men had assembled around the mosque, and were conversing in eager, anxious tones.

When they saw the veiled girl approaching they bowed their heads respectfully, as is becoming in the presence of the unhappy. They knew the beautiful Masa, in spite of her veil. They knew she had gone up to her father to implore him to take pity on himself and on her. They now stepped up to her and asked if her father still lived, and if there was any hope of preserving his life.

"His life is in your hands," replied Masa. "I come to conjure you to save the life of my father, and of the noble old men, the ulemas."

"How can we, daughter of Sheik Alepp?" cried the men. "How can we save their lives?"

"You ask me? Then I will tell you: You must bow your heads beneath the yoke. You must obey the commands of the tschorbadji."

"Never! never!" cried the men. "Has not the sheik himself forbidden us to do so? Did not the ulemas, as late as yesterday evening at sunset, command us in Allah's name to be firm?"

"They did command it," cried the girl, passionately, "and they did so because they wished to do their duty and obey the law. But it devolves upon you, ye men, to obey the higher law that dwells in us. Will you, ye men of Praousta, allow your best and noblest men to be murdered for the sake of a paltry sum of money. Do you wish that your children and grandchildren should one day point at you and say: 'Look at them, they are murderers! They slaughtered them that they might keep their money, that they might keep that which they held dearest!"

"No, Masa, it is not on account of the money!" cried the men. "It is a question of our honor, of law, and of justice. And therefore the sheik has commanded us not to pay. A double tax was imposed on us; that was unjust. The sheik and the ulemas say that, if we pay this double tax, they will the next time demand a treble, and the third time a quadruple tax. In this way they would consume our substance, and our fate would be poverty and the beggar's staff. Thus spoke the sheik and the ulemas as late as yesterday evening, and therefore must we remain firm, and, therefore, oh, forgive us, we should not dare to pay even if we could."

"But we cannot even do it," cried one of the men. "No, Masa, you may believe us, it is not in our power. The tobacco-crop has turned out badly, and the storms have destroyed our nets, and let the fish escape. Really, we could not pay even if we would. It was with the greatest difficulty that we got the simple tax together, and now the tschorbadji sends us word, by his collectors, that we must pay as much more. By Allah, it is impossible, we cannot do it."

"No, it is impossible; we cannot do it," cried the rest, in a chorus of lamentation.

"Then you are ready to let my father die—to become the murderers of our ulemas," cried Masa, falling on her knees, and stretching out her arms imploringly. "Oh, be merciful to yourselves, for I tell you the evil spirits will obtain power over you, if you do not abandon your cruel intention. I tell you, misery will be your portion, if you allow your noblest men to be murdered for the sake of vile money."

"And we tell you, Masa, that we cannot pay," cried the men, in defiant, despairing tones. "We repeat, and call Allah to witness, we have not the money they demand of us."

"You have not this money? But if you had it, would you then pay? Would you bend your heads to save the heads of our noblest men? Would you go to the tschorbadji and say: 'Here is the double tax. You do us injustice, yet we humble ourselves in order to save the lives of our sheik and the ulemas!' Say, would you do this?"

The people made no reply, but cast sorrowful glances at each other, and whispered among themselves:

"The sheik would not forgive us; he gave strict orders that we should not pay."

"But his life, and the lives of the ulemas are at stake," murmured one of them.

"Yes, his life is at stake!" cried Masa, who had heard this. "I entreat you to grant my request. Let each of you go after the tax he has laid by, and then come with me, all of you, to the tschorbadji. I will attend to the rest."

"Masa, what are you about to do?" asked the men, regarding her in astonishment. "It does not become a woman to meddle with such affairs."

"It becomes a daughter to save her father's life. This is my only purpose, and may Allah assist me in accomplishing it!" cried she, with enthusiasm. "I pray you, go after the money, and wait at the rocky stairway. I am only going to my house, and shall return directly."

She flew across the square to her father's house. Two female servants, who had been standing in the hall, anxiously awaiting the return of their mistress, cried out with joy, and hastened forward to kiss her hands.

She rushed past them up the stairway, and into her room, locking the door behind her, that none might follow. She then took hastily from a trunk, inherited from her mother, a casket, adorned with mother-of-pearl and precious stones. She opened it and looked at its contents.

"Yes, there are the ear-rings ; and there are the tiara and the necklace."

Her mother had given her, on her death-bed, these, the bridal ornaments she had brought with her from her father's house, and the sheik had often remarked that these jewels were worth at least a hundred sequins.

Until now, their value had been a matter of indifference to her. What cared she how much money could be had for her pearls and necklace? She loved this jewelry because it came from her mother, but now she thinks differently.

"The jewelry is worth at least a hundred sequins, and the tax certainly does not amount to more. And, if it were more, I should entreat the governor until he accepted the jewelry as the second tax. Thus it shall be. O dear mother, look down upon your daughter, and do not be angry with her for parting with the costly souvenir given her by you on your death-bed! Do not be angry, and see in it only love for my father!"

She bowed her head, and kissed the pearls which had once adorned her mother ; kissed the necklace and the tiara that had once shone on her dear head.

"O mother, I had thought, that on my wedding-day, I too should wear these costly ornaments. But I know that it will be a matter of indifference to him, the only one for whom I wish this day to come. He would not look at the glittering jewels, but only at me. I therefore willingly part with them ; I do not care, for he whom I love will not be grieved if I come to him unadorned."

A blissful smile overspread her lovely countenance.

She closed and locked the casket, and hid it under her veil. She hastily walked down the stairway, out of the house, and toward the mosque, where the men had begun to assemble, each one bringing with him his proportion of the tax.

"Tell me, ye men," asked Masa, quickly, "what is the amount of the tax you are called on to pay?"

"The simple tax, Masa, amounts to one hundred sequins. Consider how heavy a burden this alone is. There are hardly fifty men of us living here in Praousta, and really it seems to us quite sufficient that each of us has two sequins to pay at the end of each summer. But to pay the double tax is simply impossible. Your father well knew this, Masa, and he therefore sternly commanded us not to pay, as the demand was contrary to law and justice."

"A hundred sequins," cried she, with sparkling eyes. "Then all is well. Come, ye men of Praousta, let us ascend the stairway. The hour of the second prayer has not yet come, and until then, with the tschorbadji's consent, Mohammed Ali has granted us a respite. Wait on the crest of the rock above until I call you. I shall now go to the tschorbadji; pray ye, in the mean while, to Allah, that my words may prove effectual."

She ascended the stairway with flying footsteps. With dejected looks, the men slowly followed. "We are wrong in allowing her to persuade us to submit to the tschorbadji. We will, however, pay the just tax, and no more. We would not pay more, even if we could. Here let us stay and await the call of our sheik's daughter."

"And let us pray, as she requested," murmured others. On bended knees, and with solemn countenances, the men, but now so noisy and fierce, awaited Masa's return in silence.

The white dove flew up the pathway, through the courtyard, and into the palace, regardless of a number of her father's old friends who were lying on the ground before the gate. She dare not stop to speak to them, for the sheik would seek to learn on what errand his daughter goes alone into the palace. If she should tell him, he would command her to return to her father's harem, there to await in patience the fate Allah should have in store for his children. No, she cannot approach him, cannot brave his questioning; she would then be compelled to disobey him, for her father's life must and shall be preserved.

The tschorbadji stood in the lower hall. His heart was troubled, and his countenance sorrowful. He should not have permitted Mohammed Ali to go so far. How terrible it would be if this execution should really take place here in his courtyard, if the heads of the best men of Praousta should really fall to the ground! No, he should not have permitted the stern, pitiless young man to pledge his honor for the fulfilment of what he had undertaken. He had already asked his son Osman to seek his friend and entreat him to desist from his stern purpose. Osman was now pleading with his friend in soft, persuasive tones.

"Will he succeed?" This is now the question that agitates the tschorbadji. He had sworn by all that was holy that Mohammed should have his will; and a Moslem cannot break his oath; honor forbids it. The tschorbadji knows this very well, and therefore is he sorrowful and dejected. Should the young man persist, he must therefore unwillingly allow him to carry out his purpose. He sits there on the divan, tortured with doubt and apprehension. Will Mohammed relent? Will Osman succeed in softening his heart?

At this moment the door opens, and a veiled woman enters the room. She advances with light and noiseless footstep, and kneels down before the tschorbadji.

"O master, be merciful to your servant! Sheik Alepp's daughter kneels before you! Incline your heart to mercy, and give back to me my father!"

"Gladly would I do so, were it in my power," sighed he. "I swear it by Allah! But I have pledged my word to the young man to whom I gave authority to act in the name of the law, that he should have unlimited power to do as he should deem proper in the matter. I can therefore do nothing, though I would gladly liberate your father and abandon the collection of the tax."

"O master, I do not ask you to give up the tax! You shall have all you have commanded us to pay."

"You are prepared to pay it?" exclaimed the tschorbadji, joyously. "Then our trouble is at an end. But pray why are you, the daughter of the noble, worthy sheik, here?"

"I have come, O master, because I have an act of mercy to implore at your hands. The men of Praousta are really not able to pay two hundred sequins, but what they lack in money I have in money's worth."

"You speak in enigmas, maiden," said the tschorbadji.

"You have the money, and yet you have it not. What does this mean?"

"I have not the money in coined sequins," said she, looking toward the door as though she feared Mohammed might enter and be angry when she presented her love-offering. "Look at this, tschorbadji; these were my mother's jewels, but they are now mine, and no one else has a right to them. Gladly will I part with them for the sake of the men of our village. I have often been told that these jewels are worth more than a hundred sequins. I pray you, take them of me for that sum."

Still kneeling, she handed the tschorbadji the casket containing the jewelry. He took it and regarded it thoughtfully.

"Did it devolve upon me alone to decide this question, gladly would I take the jewelry, good maiden. But remember, I have sworn to Mohammed Ali that the prisoners should only then be released when the double tax shall have been paid in glittering gold-pieces. And I must keep my word. Gladly would I give you their value, but I must confess to the daughter of my sheik that I have not in my possession so large a sum. But remain here; a thought occurs to me," said he. "The ambassador who comes from Stamboul for the tax, and who arrived here yesterday, brought with him for Cousrouf Pacha a large purse filled with sequins. If I show him this jewelry and ask him—yes, I will do so. Remain here, maiden, until I return. You might think I would keep your jewels and not return. Take your jewelry and remain here. I am going in quest of one who may be able to assist us. I say us, for I, too, shall be much pleased if the matter can be settled in this peaceful manner. Wait here, daughter of my sheik, while I go in search of one who can settle this matter to the satisfaction of all!"

CHAPTER V.

THE DELIVERANCE.

"THIS, dear sir, is the woman of whom I spoke," said the tschorbadji, throwing open the door of the room, and stepping aside respectfully to allow his distinguished guest, Cousrouf Pacha, to pass in. "Salute this gentleman with reverence, daughter of my sheik," said he, turning to Masa. "You stand in the presence of a mighty man; he alone can help you."

"O master, if it is in your power, I pray you to help me," cried the maiden, falling upon her knees before the pacha. "Be merciful! Deliver my father from his prison; deliver us all from fear and danger!"

"What does all this mean?" asked Cousrouf, haughtily, turning to the tschorbadji, who had respectfully stepped aside. "You bade me come to decide an important question, and I find here only a young woman who is weeping. What does this mean?"

"This young maiden is the daughter of Sheik Alepp, who is, as you know, imprisoned in the court-yard. She loves her father dearly, and has continually worked and pleaded for him since his imprisonment. She now comes to say that the men of Praousta are really not able to pay the double tax. You know that, although I would now gladly abandon the collection of the tax, I have sworn to Mohammed Ali that he alone should settle the matter. This tender-hearted maiden has now thought of a means of solving this difficulty. She brings these jewels, inherited from her mother, and asks me to give her their value, a sum sufficient to pay the second tax. I, however, am a poor man, and have not the hundred sequins to give her for her jewelry, in order that she may take them to the people of Praousta, for from them only will Mohammed accept payment of the tax. Therefore, pardon my importunity. You are rich and mighty; when your purse is empty you can easily refill it. You are noble and generous, and will perhaps be disposed to take the jewelry, and let the loving daughter have the money wherewith to obtain the deliverance of her father."

"Where are the jewels?" asked the pacha, gazing with impassioned eyes upon the veiled figure of the maiden of whose countenance the eyes alone were visible. But they were so beautiful, and rested upon him with such an expression of tender entreaty, that he was moved to the depths of his soul. "Where are the jewels?" repeated he, slightly bending down over her.

She raised her hand and gave him the casket. "Here they are, noble master. May Allah soften your heart, that I may not be deprived of my beloved father!" He listened attentively to this voice. It seemed to him he had never heard sweeter music than the tender, tremulous tones of this maiden pleading for her father. His gaze still fixed upon her, he opened the casket and glanced indifferently at its precious contents. For a moment a strange smile played about his lips, and he then turned with a mocking, contemptuous expression of countenance, and addressed the tschorbadji:

"Tschorbadji, can you really so poorly distinguish between genuine gold and precious stones and a worthless imitation? These are playthings for children. These are not pearls, and this is not gold. A well-planned swindle, truly. No Jew would give you two sequins for these things, not to speak of a hundred."

"Swindle!" she cried, springing to her feet, and her voice was now clear and threatening. "You accuse me of planning a swindle! You are wrong, sir; and if there be any one here who cannot distinguish true gold and pearls from a base imitation, you are he! The gold and pearls are genuine, and were inherited by me from my mother, who was the daughter of a rich jeweler in Stamboul. She bequeathed them to me, and the casket has not been opened before since her death. And you accuse me of attempting to defraud you! You act ungenerously."

"Dear sir, forgive her, forgive her bold words!" said the tschorbadji, addressing in earnest tones the pacha, whose eager gaze was still fixed on the maiden. It seemed as though her anger had power to excite his sympathy and admiration.

"It is of no moment," said he, haughtily. "I pray you, tschorbadji, withdraw into the adjoining room. I wish to converse with her alone, and if in my power I will assist her, notwithstanding her imitation jewelry."

"O master, you are assuredly wrong," urged the maiden. "The pearls are real, and the gold of the purest. I swear it by Allah! If you do not intend to purchase my jewelry, and enable me to save my father, tell me so at once, but you must not mock me."

"I am not mocking you!—Kindly withdraw into the next room, tschorbadji, but leave the door open. You shall see all that passes between us, but I beg that you will close your ear. I wish to deal with the maiden alone, and it concerns no one to hear what we have to say."

"I shall withdraw to the farther end of the adjoining room, where no word of your conversation can reach me," said the tschorbadji, respectfully. The pacha smiled condescendingly on the tschorbadji, who walked into the next room, and seated himself at its farthest end.

"Now, daughter of Sheik Alepp, now we will consider this matter," said the pacha. "I am willing to assist you, but you must do your part."

"Master, what shall I do? I am anxious to do all I can."

"Do you love your father?"

"Yes, master! I love him with all my soul; he is the master given me by Allah, and he is at the same time my friend. He is every thing to me, mother, brother, sister. We two are alone together, and love nothing in the world but each other!"

"Then I am sorry for you, poor child!" said the pacha. "Your father is lost if the tax is not paid. You say yourself that the men of Praousta cannot pay the double tax, and should they fail to do so the heads of the four prisoners must fall."

"Be merciful! O master, be merciful," cried Masa. "You are rich and mighty. You can save him. Oh, save him!"

"You are in error," said the pacha, "in this case I am powerless; even the tschorbadji can do nothing. He pledged his word to Mohammed Ali; he took the triple oath that he would allow him to act as he should think best in this matter. Mohammed Ali has sworn that the heads of the prisoners shall fall unless the people of Praousta pay the tax, and that he will behead them himself if no other executioner can be found."

"Horrible! and thus was his oath," cried Masa, shuddering. "I pray you, master, tell me, were these his words; did he swear he would himself execute my father?"

"He did. And, believe me, the youth will keep his word. He is blood-thirsty and cruel, and it will gladden his heart to cool his wrath in your father's blood."

"No! It is impossible!" cried Masa, in terror. "He cannot be so cruel, and he is not!"

"Then you know him?" said the pacha, his eyes gleaming with hatred.

"I saw him this morning, and implored him to be merciful. I went down on my knees before him, and besought him not to take my father's life."

"And yet he will do it! I tell you this Mohammed is a fierce youth. Mercy is a word of which he knows nothing. You yourself have seen that he is relentless."

"Yes," murmured she; "he is relentless."

"There is, therefore, nothing to be hoped for from him," said the pacha. "The tax must be paid, or the prisoners' heads fall."

She sighed profoundly, and covered her face with her hands. She knows it is so; he told her so himself, in an agony of pain and sorrow. The men must pay the tax, or all is lost; her father, or he whom she loves, must die. She knows and feels this; and, therefore, has she come to implore mercy of the stranger, whose gaze fills her with anxiety and terror. She thinks of her father, and of the youth whom she loves, and her tongue is eloquent, for she is pleading for both.

"I can help you," said the pacha, tranquilly and haughtily, "and I will do so."

"You will?" cried she, joyously; and her eyes sparkled like the stars of heaven, and filled the pacha, whose gaze was still fixed on her, with delight. "You will help me, gracious master, sent by Allah to my assistance, you will deliver my father from prison?"

"I will," replied the pacha. "That is, it depends on whether you will grant a request of mine, and do what I wish."

"And what is it you desire, master?" asked the innocent, anxious maiden in tremulous tones.

He gazed on her passionately, a smile lighting up his countenance. "Lift your veil, and let me look upon your countenance."

She shuddered, and drew her veil so closely about her face, that it concealed her eyes also.

"O master!" said she, in low tones of entreaty. "As you know, the custom of our land forbids a girl to appear unveiled before a man."

"Unless he be the man who takes her into his harem," replied he, smiling.

"Yes, master, only before him whom she follows into the harem; and then only when she has already followed him, may she unveil her face before him. Therefore, be merciful, O master! Honor the custom of our land, and do not demand of me what I could never confess to my father!"

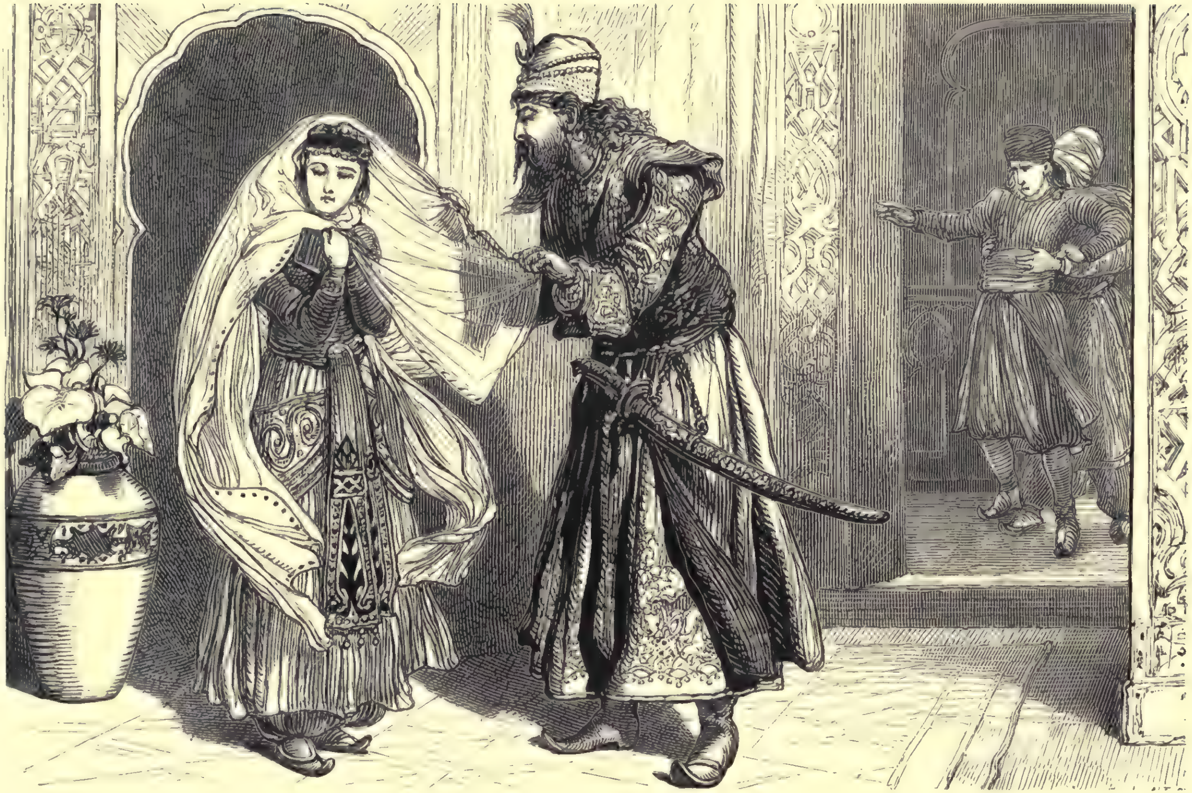
"Silly girl," answered he. "I do demand it, and, if it is denied me, your father's head falls. You admit he is the only man you love, and your only shield. When he is dead, you will be a beggar, and will not even be able to purchase a veil, for the poor are everywhere unveiled, and are, on that account, no worse than you who mask your faces with veils. Therefore, daughter of the sheik, lift your veil!"

"Mercy! mercy!" she exclaimed, raising her hands entreatingly. "I cannot do what you desire. I dare not. I have sworn an oath!"

"An oath?" said he, gazing at her piercingly. "To whom did you swear this oath?"

She trembled, and did not reply. She felt that she must not confess the truth, for that would be to invoke destruction upon the head of Mohammed.

"I swore it to myself," she whispered in low tones. "I swore to remain pure and honest, as beseemed my mother's daughter, and never to raise my veil in the presence of a strange man."



COUSROUF PACHA LIFTS MASA'S VEIL.

"Then keep your oath!" said he, stepping close to her. "You shall not raise your veil, but I will; I will do it. I must see your face before I fulfil my promise, before I deliver your father from prison."

He raised his arm. She sought to defend herself, and prayed for mercy. In vain! With a quick movement he lifted her veil, and fastened his gaze on her countenance. At that moment a cry resounded through the apartment, a cry of rage, and at the door of the adjoining room appeared Mohammed Ali, pale and infuriated. He was about to rush into the room, but with a bound the tschorbadji sprang to his side, grasped him with all the strength which his anxiety gave him, drew him back, closed the door, locked it, and drew the key out of the lock.

"You ought not to enter, and, by Allah, you shall not!"

"I must enter!" cried Mohammed, gnashing his teeth, and looking like an enraged lion, as he endeavored to wrest the key from the tschorbadji. But the latter grasped the key firmly, and anxiously called his son.

"What has happened?" asked Osman in anxious tones, as he entered the room. Mohammed stood still, controlling his wrath with a gigantic effort.

"You ask, Osman, what has happened. Within is Cousrouf Pacha with the sheik Alepp's daughter, and he treats with her for her honor and innocence, and she allows him to do so!" cried he, loudly and fiercely.

"That is not true," said the governor. "You accuse him wrongly. There is no reason why all the world should not see and hear what is going on within. It is your fault alone that I found it necessary to lock the door. What was your object in coming?"

"I came because the decisive hour has arrived, and I saw, in the adjoining room, Cousrouf Pacha raising the girl's veil."

"You came and rushed past me like a madman. How do the girl's actions concern you. She came to seek deliverance for her father."

"How her actions concern me, you ask, tschorbadji?" he cried, clinching his fists. "How Masa's actions concern me, you wish to know?"

"Be still, Mohammed!" said Osman, whose keen vision had read the youth's soul, in low, entreating tones. "I pray you do not betray your secret."

Mohammed shook convulsively, and covered his face with his hands. "It is true," he murmured. "I must and will be silent. She is lost to me. I will think of nothing but revenge, let all else be forgotten.—Tschorbadji, you swore that I alone should decide the fate of the prisoners, and you will keep your oath!"

"I will keep my oath, as beseems an honest man, yet I hope, Mohammed, that you will not be relentless; if you had heard, as I have, the poor young girl's lamentations, it would have softened your heart, and it would not have become necessary to resort to the pacha."

"As if he could assist her," he murmured to himself. "As if all assistance were not now out of the question."

"Be composed, Mohammed," said Osman, entreatingly, as he threw his arms around his friend's neck. "Do not complain, do not accuse. Be firm, and prove that you have a strong and noble heart."

He cried out in piercing tones, as the lion cries when it sees the hyena rending his young, as the eagle cries when the storm-wind sweeps away its nest with its young. Then in wild emotion he threw his arms around his friend's neck, and groaned heavily. Within, in the saloon, nothing could be heard of the loud talking in the adjoining room. The pacha still held the veil high uplifted and gazed at Masa.

"What is your name?" asked he, in low, soft tones. She cast down her eyes before his passionate glances, and a deep blush suffused itself over her features, making her still more beautiful.

"My name is Masa," replied the girl, in a low voice. "But I pray you, sir, let my veil fall over my face again. I am afraid!"

"Let me gaze on you one short moment longer," whispered he, ardently. "You are beautiful, Masa, as are the stars of heaven, as are the blush-roses in my garden. No, you are still more beautiful, for they soon fade, but you are in the rosy dawn of your loveliness, and your youth is still radiant in the morning-dew of innocence. Oh, you are surpassingly beautiful, and it seems to me the prophet has graciously sent me one of his houris from Paradise."

"I entreat you, sir, let go my veil," said she, in dismay, while two great tears trickled through her long black eyelashes and rolled down her cheeks.

"These are pearls, more beautiful pearls, Masa, than are contained in yonder casket," whispered the pacha. "They will be genuine pearls if you let me kiss them from your cheeks."

She stepped back proudly, tore the veil from his hand, and drew it down over her face again. "I have given no one the right to insult me, and you insult me!"

"How musical this sounds! How sweet these words of indignant innocence!"

At this moment Mohammed's voice, in loud, angry tones, was heard in the adjoining room. The pacha smiled, and motioned with his head in that direction.

"You have seen Mohammed Ali, and you now hear him; he is a desperado, and will kill your father!"

"Yes," she murmured to herself, "he will now be pitiless, he will now kill him."

"But I," said the pacha, in gentle tones, "I have pity, and I will save your father."

"You will save him?" she said, tremblingly.

"I will," said he. "But hear me, Masa, charming crimson rose, hear me."

"I am listening," said she, sobbing.

He did not heed this, but stepped nearer, and bent down over her. "Masa, your jewelry I will not take, I want no such recompense; you shall even have money, all you may desire, if I can purchase you with it."

"Me, sir?" she cried, in horror. "You wish to purchase me?"

"Why are you so terrified? I have in my harem many women who are as beautiful and young as you are, and of much nobler birth, and they esteem themselves happy in belonging to me. But I tell you, Masa, I will hold you higher than them all. You shall rule over them all, and they shall

all bow down before you, for Cousrouf Pacha will set them the example. By Allah ! I swear it to you with the triple oath : not my slave, but my favorite, shall you be. Cousrouf Pacha will honor you as the first, as the queen of his harem."

"It is impossible, sir," she cried, in terror. "My father's daughter cannot sell herself. She is a free woman, and must remain so."

"Then remain so, and your father dies," said he, composedly. "Plume yourself with your freedom, but say, too, in your proud arrogance, that you are the murderess of your father. For, I say to you, Mohammed swore the oath, and he will keep it. Your father will die, and you will be his murderess."

"Allah be merciful ! I cannot allow my father to die. No !" she groaned aloud.

"He dies if you do not accept what I offer. I repeat it, wealth and honors shall be yours. The daughter of the poor sheik of the wretched village shall become the favorite of the pacha. I shall not remain here long. The message will soon come that calls me to Stamboul ; and you, Masa, shall go with me. At the court of the grand-vizier you shall be the first ; I will honor you above all the rest, and lay at your feet all that I possess, for you are beautiful, and my heart is filled with love for you. I will make you happy at my side. And now decide. Without in the iron cage stands your father awaiting his deliverance, and here stands his daughter, and beside her Cousrouf Pacha, who offers her money, all she may desire, and lays every thing that he possesses at her feet. If you accept this offer, Masa, your father walks out of his prison a free man in spite of the blood-thirsty youth. Take the money and do not think I am purchasing you ; it shall only be an earnest of your future. If you suppose you are to be, as you say, a slave, you are mistaken. You will only become the slave of your love for me."

"No, sir ! never can I love you," she cried, vehemently.

"You cannot ? It is thus the heart of the wild-dove speaks ! Masa, you will, because you will be touched by my love. When you see me doing every thing to make you happy it will touch your heart, and you will love me."

At this moment loud cries and lamentations were heard from without.

"Those are the men of Praousta, who have come up and are lamenting. Do you not hear the call from the mosque? The second hour of prayer is at hand, the time has come. Decide, Masa!"

She sank down on her knees, groaning; and prayed to Allah for mercy.

"O Masa," said the pacha, raising her from her knees, "Cousrouf prays to you, be merciful to your father; yield, be mine and save him."

Loud cries of grief again resounded without. Masa shook with terror. "I cannot allow my father to die, I cannot! I yield, I am ready; give me the money, that I may bring it to these people."

"I will give it to you, and you shall rescue your father. And now you are mine; not my slave, but my queen. Go up into my harem while I take the money out to these people."

"No, not so," she cried, entreatingly. "Leave me my freedom for this one day only; let me remain this one day with my father, and do not let him have a suspicion of the price I have paid for his liberty."

"Then let it be so," said he, regarding her fixedly. "You swear, by the memory of your mother, that you will voluntarily return to my harem early to-morrow morning."

"I swear, by the memory of my mother, that I will return here early to-morrow morning."

"You will come to the back-gate of my garden, where my servants will await you to conduct you to me. And now I am going after the money. Go into the adjoining room, to the tschorbadji."

He opened the door, and beckoned to the governor. "Await me here a moment; I am going after the money with which to release the prisoners."

He turned to her once more: "You understand, until early to-morrow morning. You have sworn by all you hold sacred —by Allah and by your mother."

"Yes, I have so sworn," said she, in a low voice.

"You will keep your word, and henceforth you will belong to me; for you are now mine: remember this. You are mine wherever you go, my property, my slave. This evening, when the night sinks down, and when your father has retired to rest, then you will come to my garden, where I shall await you with my eunuchs."

"I shall come, master. Am I not your slave, and have you not paid for me?"

He nodded to her, and then turned and left the room.

Masa drew her veil closer about her face, that none might see that it was wet with her tears.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FLIGHT.

THE court-yard without now presents a busy appearance. The fishermen of Praousta, becoming impatient and anxious, had hurried in a body up the stairway in the rock. When the signal for the morning prayer was sounded from the minarets they knew that nothing was to be hoped for from the efforts of the sheik's daughter, and they agreed among themselves that they would go up in a body and petition for mercy.

They hastily agreed upon what they should say to the governor, and determined, of course, in their generosity of heart, that they would yield, and promise the governor to pay the double tax if he would only patiently wait a little while. This was their resolve. The sheik and the ulemas must be rescued, cost what it might. With this firm resolve they hastened up the stairway, entered the outer court-yard of the palace, and loudly demanded to be conducted to the governor.

But their clamors were in vain. At the gate of the palace stood the eight soldiers of the body-guard, with drawn swords, prepared to defend the entrance.

Enraged, the fishermen pressed forward with uplifted knives, threatening destruction to all who should attempt to bar their passage.

"Where is the governor? We must speak with him; we must have mercy."

"No, no mercy," cried a loud, sonorous voice; and, as they turned in the direction from which the voice came, they saw a fearful object standing in the middle of the court-yard—the block covered with black cloth. Near by, proudly erect, his lips firmly compressed, as if to repress words of imprecation or wrath that struggled for utterance, stood Mohammed Ali, like an angry spirit, ready to judge and to punish. Thus he stood there, and, behind, a slave holding in his hands the glittering axe. "Behold this, ye men of Praousta, and bow down in the dust; pay what the tschorbadji has demanded of you, or the heads of my prisoners shall fall as I have sworn."

Horror, rage, and anger, were combined in the single cry that resounded from the breasts of all.

"Mercy, mercy! you cruel boy! Do you intend to prevent the men of Praousta from returning tranquilly to their homes? do you wish to make slaves of them?"

"I have authority to act as I am acting, and I will grant no mercy to the men of Praousta. Men must obey the laws, and humbly submit to them; and this you have not done, ye rebels! Why have you followed the sheik and the ulemas? You see they must bow down in the dust, after all; and, unless you pay the tax demanded by the tschorbadji, they shall die."

"Listen, ye men of Praousta, listen!" cried a loud voice from one of the windows of the palace.

There stood Cousrouf Pacha, beckoning to the fishermen with his uplifted hand.

"Come into the palace; I wish to speak with you.—Make free the passage, ye soldiers! In the name of the tschorbadji, I command you to allow these men to enter!"

With a loud shout the men rushed toward the door, and the body-guard stepped aside, and left the passage free.

Mohammed's glittering eyes followed them, and he suddenly turned pale, for Masa's lovely form now appeared on the threshold of the palace. A cry resounded from his lips. He stood helpless and motionless with anger and humiliation. It was now clear to him. She, who had sworn to love, who had sworn by her father's spirit that no man but he should ever raise her veil, had proved unfaithful. She had broken her sacred oath! She, whom he now loved with his whole heart and soul, had blasted his hopes. The thought almost stopped the beating of his heart. "Masa shall repent! Mohammed will wreak vengeance upon humanity for her broken faith."

He trembled, and pressed his lips firmly together, when her white figure appeared in the doorway. But Masa saw him not, nor thought of him; her whole attention was occupied with her father. With a joyous cry, and widely-extended arms, she flew to the enclosure. "O father, O my father," cried she, in loud, exultant tones, "you are free!"

"Free?" exclaimed the sheik. "It is impossible! It cannot be!"

Mohammed sprang forward, and thrust Masa aside with such force that she sank upon the ground. A cry of anguish escaped her lips. She veiled herself, and gazed at him with anxious, imploring glance. He could not endure it; he turned his eyes away from her; he would not see her; he would be as strong in his hatred as he was in his love!

"There is no mercy for the *traitoress!*" murmured he. "I will punish thee for thy unfaithfulness. I will revenge myself upon thee!"

The men of Praousta now issue from the house, and shout joyfully before the cage in which the aged men are imprisoned:

"You are saved—you are free. A noble man was found who sent us assistance. Long live Cousrouf Pacha, your deliverer!"

The pacha threw open the window. He stood there, his form proudly erect. Upon his turban glittered the golden half-moon; above it waved the eagle's wing; the sun fell upon his sword and richly-chased poniard, playing gayly with the precious stones with which his garments were adorned. His eyes sparkled, and a wondrous smile hovered about his lips. And again they shouted: "Long live Cousrouf Pacha, our deliverer in time of need, our savior!"

He bowed his haughty head, and his eyes rested passionately upon the young maiden, kneeling upon the ground in her agony. From her his glance passed over to Mohammed Ali. He saw the pain and anguish imprinted upon the livid countenance of the youth, and smiled triumphantly.

He withdrew from the window, and hastened down to the court-yard, followed by the tschorbadji. He approached Masa, and, bending over her, said, softly: "Rise, daughter of thy father. Your sorrow and trouble have passed away. Be gay and happy once more. That which wicked men sought to do unto you has been frustrated. Your father is free.—Tschorbadji," said he, "command your servant Mohammed—command him to unlock the gate of this cage, and to release the prisoners he has guarded so closely."

"No!" shouted Mohammed, in a voice of thunder. With my consent alone can it be opened!—Guard the gates, ye officers; I go in quest of the key; and not one shall be released until, kneeling at my feet, with their heads in the dust, the rebels pay to me the double tax. What I have sworn—what I have sworn by my honor, that must be done."

"We will not consent! We will never yield!" cried the men, rushing about in confusion.

"Then the prisoners' heads shall fall!" cried he, exultingly waving his sword in the air. "The hour until which I granted a respite has come; the gold has not been paid; the law cannot be broken with impunity. You pay, or the hour of vengeance is at hand!"

"We will not kneel; we will not humiliate ourselves before you, you boy!"

With his sword still threateningly raised, Mohammed gazed around him.

The tschorbadji and his son now approached the men, and pleaded with them urgently. They explained to them that Mohammed was in the right; that he could not act differently. As he had sworn by his honor to force them to pay the double tax, he must therefore keep to his word.

"Do as he tells you," said the tschorbadji, in an entreating tone; "pay the tax he demands. Do it, ye men! I will reward you well, if you do as I say. He who goes to Mohammed to pay the money, he can ask at my hands a favor."

The men's anger became subdued by the soft, kind words of their master. With bowed heads and gloomy aspect, they approached Mohammed Ali, who still stood with threatening sword before the cage.

"We kneel before you in the dust; we have returned to our duty," said one of the men. "Here are the two sequins that I have to pay."

"Here are mine," "And mine," cried they all, with one accord. They knelt and offered Mohammed the gold.

He did not take it; but, gazing steadfastly and bitterly at the pacha, he thrust them aside with a movement of impatience. "Lay your gold upon the block. What, through your obstinacy, has occurred, cannot be obliterated by your gold. Lay your gold upon the block, for to it you offer your gold."

Laughing wildly, he turned and bowed before the veiled maiden. "But you pay for it with your honor, with your shame."

She fell forward, and a shriek of agony burst from her lips. But she still gazed with tender eyes upon the youth who looked down upon her so fiercely.

"Traitoress! You have forgotten your oath!"

"No, Mohammed," whispered she. "Hear me!"

"Away from me! do you still wish to deceive me?" Again he thrust her from him. Masa would have fallen, had not Osman hurried forward and sustained her.

"Forgive him," whispered he, softly. "He is wild with anger and pain."

"O Osman, is all known to you?" asked she, in trembling tones.

Osman bowed his head. Tears stood in his eyes. "Be quiet—we are watched. In the evening I will send you word."

"Open now the gates, and let the prisoners out," said the tschorbadji to Mohammed. "The law has been vindicated."

"It shall be as you command," said Mohammed, with the calmness sometimes born of despair. He drew forth the key, and placed it in the lock. Masa sprang forward. The gate opened, and now she stood beside her father. She threw her arms about him, and kissed his lips. Then she bowed her head upon his breast, and wept bitterly. The old man held her close to his heart, and then, lifting her up, bore her, trembling with emotion, from out the cage, in which he had endured such torture for four-and-twenty hours.

The ulemas followed him. Joyfully the men greeted the released prisoners, and prayed that they might escort them home in triumph.

"I see no cause for triumph," said the sheik, calmly. "You have done what I cannot approve. It were better, I think, to have laid my gray head upon the block, rather than you should place upon it your hard-earned gold, becoming thereby the slaves of him who gave it to you, and has thus lowered you by his gift."

"No, sheik," said Cousrouf Pacha, advancing proudly. "He who gave this gold gave it not with such intent. He gave it not to humiliate these men. I gave it for your sake, and for your daughter's sake," continued he, in loud tones, and for an instant his eyes gleamed passionately on Masa.

He well knew his words would enter Mohammed's heart like a knife. Turning slowly, he glanced at him, and smiled at seeing him turn pale.

"I am now about to leave you," said the pacha. "The grand-sultan calls me from here. Fear not, therefore, O sheik, that my countenance will longer humiliate you. I give you freedom. Return to your friends; you are free!"

"Long live Cousrouf Pacha!" was the exultant cry of the men of Praousta.

No one heard, amid the many voices, the one crying: "Cursed be Cousrouf Pacha! Cursed be my enemy unto death! I swear revenge upon him!"

"Cease, Mohammed; be guarded, be silent! Dissemble your anger, your pain, O friend of my heart! Believe me, all will soon be changed: the sky that now seems so dark, will soon be clear with the light of the sun and of love!"

"No, never, Osman, never," murmured Mohammed, gazing bitterly at Masa, who, leaning upon her father's arm, and followed by the ulemas and the jubilant fishermen, was now leaving the court-yard. "Nevermore, Osman, nevermore, will the sun shine for me! Night and impenetrable darkness envelop my fate ! But I swear to revenge myself upon those who have done me this wrong ! "

"Silence, silence, Mohammed !" said Osman, entreatingly, to his friend. "See, my father approaches, and with him Cousrouf Pacha. How triumphant he seems ! He knows he has pained you. Will you permit him to see and rejoice in your pain ?"

"No, no, you are right ! He shall not rejoice in my pain ! Bitter heartache shall I prepare for him some day !" Laughing bitterly to himself, he advanced toward the two approaching him.

"Mohammed Ali," said the governor, solemnly, "I thank you for your good services. You have accomplished that which, by your honor, you swore to fulfil. And I affirm that I also have kept my word. I allowed you to do as you thought best, and did not restrain you when I thought your acts cruel ; but I must nevertheless admit that you have acted with wisdom and with courage. Gladly will I reward you for that which you obtained through your daring. It is fit that such a man should have an office, and exercise the duties thereof from now on. Mohammed Ali, I have good news to impart to you ! The scenes of yesterday have taught me that, to preserve peace and quiet, it is necessary to have soldiers at hand. I have already dispatched a courier to the neighboring town, and a garrison shall hereafter stay here or at Cavalla. You, Mohammed Ali, I appoint *boulouk bashi*, or captain of this company that is to enter Cavalla to-morrow."

A deep color overspread, like the morning sunlight, Mohammed's countenance :—"Master, you well know how to reward generously him who has done naught but his duty."

"And now, my Mohammed," whispered Osman, softly, "or rather boulouk bashi, let me be the first to congratulate you. How proud and happy I shall be when I see Mohammed Ali, in his glittering uniform, marching at the head of his company. Proud and happy shall I account myself when so handsome, so brave a soldier, considers me worthy of his protection !"

"You make sport of me," murmured Mohammed, a soft smile illuminating his countenance. In the spirit he saw himself in his handsome uniform at the head of his company. Truth and justice are once more acknowledged. The hour of humiliation and pain has gone by. The time he had so long looked for had arrived. He listened calmly to the tschorbadji's announcement that on the morrow his uniform would be ready, as well as those of his soldiers, which were to be sent at once to Cavalla.

"There will be a number of uniforms, and the young boulouk bashi can make his choice from among them."

"And the sword, my father, the sword, I will give to my friend Mohammed Ali!" cried Osman, joyously. "Do you remember the gold-handled sword given me by the grand-vizier on his last visit? I have kept it jealously, though, alas! I can never wear it myself. And now my friend shall wear it in my place, and, when I see him pass by with the glittering weapon at his side, it will seem as if I carried it myself in defence of my beloved country. Come with me, Mohammed," said he, taking his friend's arm. "You are in need of rest. You have been deeply moved, and now let us retire. It is quiet within my father's apartments; there we will betake ourselves and repose together."

"We will all follow you," said the governor.—"I pray Cousrouf Pacha to accompany us. The day is bright and lovely, and I think we all stand in need of rest and refreshment. There we will take our coffee, and at the same time something more substantial together, and, enveloped by the smoke from our pipes, we will discuss the events of this day, which commenced so stormily, and now seems to end so pleasantly to our general joy."

"Who knows, tschorbadji, that it brings joy to all?" said Cousrouf Pacha, sneeringly. "I, of course, have cause to rejoice and be thankful, this day. But it strikes me, Mohammed Ali is by nature little inclined to be thankful. Instead of joyfully receiving his honors, he seems to gaze wrathfully upon us all."

"I think I have cause to do so," said Mohammed, impetuously turning to him.

"And wherefore?" said Cousrouf Pacha. "Wherefore? Speak on."

"Well," said Mohammed, "many, I think, receive honors which they have not deserved, and have done naught to earn, as if they were to be bought, and they knew how to purchase them. I say that honor, power, and consideration, often spring from hypocrisy and slavish submission; and that through cunning, deceit, and shame, many a free human soul becomes abject and lost. I hope I am understood by Cousrouf Pacha!"

"I regret that I can neither understand nor explain these strange words. But you must feel, tschorbadji, that I have to deny myself the pleasure of remaining longer with you in the company of this wild young man, whose mind seems bewildered by the honors conferred on him. Enjoy yourselves in quiet repose, and be happy at your feast."

"Do as it suits you," cried Mohammed. "I shall not share it. I am exhausted, and shall retire to rest and refresh myself. Farewell!"

He bowed his head, and carried his hand in greeting both to lip and brow. He then turned, and hastened rapidly away.

The pacha followed him with an evil glance. "The froward youth is forever in my path," said he, threateningly. "It was well for him he withdrew, for it might have come to bitter enmity between us. Should he dare again what he this day ventured upon, his life would no longer be secure. Being a guest in your house, and meeting him there, made me considerate to-day. But woe unto him should he cross my path, when no such considerations restrain me! Bitterly shall he repent of his words."

CHAPTER VII.

THE MESSENGER.

JOY and merriment prevailed throughout the day in the village of Praousta; a continuous firing of guns was kept up, which delighted the boys, and terrified the sick, and the timid little girls. Joyous songs were sung, and, on the grand square before the mosque, men and women assembled for a dance.

The tambourine rang out merrily, and cymbals and flutes filled the air with sweet sounds.

A sail on the water was arranged for the afternoon, and the boats were gayly decked with flags for the occasion.

In the first large boat the sheik, the ulemas, and the leading men of the village, were reposing on carpets. Two boats containing the musicians followed; and then came, in four gayly-adorned ones, the women of the village, enveloped in their white veils, and greeting the men in the other boats with their bright eyes only. It was a beautiful spectacle. The sea itself seemed to rejoice over it; it murmured softly, and curled its waves caressingly upon the beach.

The governor, accompanied by his distinguished guest, Cousrouf Pacha, had come down to Praousta. Both were saluted from the boats with shouts of applause; handkerchiefs and caps were waved, and the blessing of Allah and of the prophet invoked upon their heads. But curses also resounded from time to time from their midst.

"These two gentlemen are kind-hearted. They saved us, and Mohammed Ali alone was the cause of all our trouble and anxiety. Woe to the traitor! He wished to make himself a name, to mount to honor and power upon our shoulders, though we should be ground down in the dust. Woe to him! woe to him! The governor is kind, we have nothing to fear from him. Mohammed Ali alone is our foe—woe to him!"

This was the cry from one to the other; all joined in it; they all raised their fists menacingly against Mohammed Ali. "May he hear our curses, and see our threatening hands! We will be avenged on him for what he has done to us. He shall be repaid for all the evil he has done to the sheik; of this he can rest assured. We have loved and been kind to him; we have treated him as if he were our child; he is indebted to us for all he is, and for all he can do. From us he learned to manage a boat, to use a gun—and thus has he rewarded us. Woe to him!" This cry resounded again and again from boat to boat:

"Woe to him! Woe to Mohammed Ali, the son of Sitta Khadra!"

But he heard nothing of all this; neither the curses, nor the laughter and shouts of joy. He had gone to his solitary resort on the rock above. There he was alone, without fear of being observed by the eyes of men. There no one could hear his wails of anguish. There he was alone with wind and waves. Alas, how short a time had elapsed since he had stood there in joy and exultation! His soul had revelled in all the delights of the world, in all the glories of Paradise. Only a few hours had passed, and yet it seemed to him that he was entirely transformed, that he had became another man since then.

With what pious thoughts, with what ecstasy had he, that morning, greeted the rising sun! His heart had been filled with ineffable bliss; tears of delight had stood in his eyes. Now the evening is sinking down, the first evening after that blissful sunrise, and vanished is all he had gloried in; lost, all he believed he had won. A white dove had fluttered down from heaven, he had seen a fair swan full of innocence and loveliness at his side; and now, the white dove had transformed itself into a monster, and the fair swan had become an evil spirit. Yes, an evil spirit had assumed the form of a swan, and cast a wicked spell over his heart, and now—O Mohammed, learn to suffer! Rend yourself with your agony; press your hands convulsively to your breast till the blood trickles out from your finger-nails; cry out in your anguish, till the eagle, aroused in his nest, looks out with greedy eyes after the poor creature that has dared to disturb the king of the air! Let curses resound from the quivering lips that are as pale as those of the dead! Curse the swan for having become a ghin; the white swan for having transformed herself into a cat, and then awake from your despair. Behold her standing before you with the sweet expression on her delicate features, with the blushing cheeks as you raise the veil, with the crimson lips that grow more crimson still as yours touch them. Behold her, in all her loveliness, and kneel down on the place where she stood, and passionately kiss the earth her feet have touched. Bless her in your love, and curse her in the anger of your hatred!

First love is passionate in its bliss, burning its agony, and agony and bliss, fury and delight, are all pouring through your soul, and giving you the baptism of pain, making of the youth a man.

"Tear love from my soul, and enable me to tread it under foot!" he cries out fiercely, as he now rises from the place he had just touched with his lips. "Root out these memories from my breast, spirit of my mother! She to whom I here prayed, and swore fidelity, has proved untrue. Strike blind the eyes of my soul, that they may no longer see this horror! Make deaf my ears, that I may no longer hear the sweet voice that sounds like heavenly music! What was it she said, what were her words?

"'I will be thine, and love no other but thee!' she said. 'By my mother's spirit, I swear to you that no other man shall lift this veil from my face; I will be thine, alone!'

"It was music when she said it. It filled my heart with heavenly joyousness. And now it proves to have been evil spirits only, who had come up from the deep to deceive a poor heart! Oh, these memories, they will follow me like a black shadow throughout life. In wild merriment and conflict, I shall be able to hush them in the noisy day; but, in the stillness of the night, they will come back to charm—no, to tear my heart! O Masa, Masa, what have you done!"

Overwhelmed with his agony, he sank to the ground, and kissed again and again the place where she had stood, and wept aloud.

"Mohammed!" suddenly exclaimed a voice behind him. "Mohammed Ali! The man who weeps has no manly courage, and it would be vain to call on him for assistance!"

Is another evil spirit beside him? What woman is this who suddenly appears at his side, closely shrouded in a black veil? Is it another ghin come up from the deep?

"You are right," murmured he, "no one need longer hope for assistance from me; I will give vengeance and destruction to those who call on me for help!"

He springs to his feet and stares fiercely at the woman. "Away from me! Allah is Allah, the only one in heaven, and Mohammed is his prophet. Away from me, evil spirit!"

He exorcises this creature with the oath with which evil spirits are driven out. But it seems this spirit is not to be exorcised. The veiled woman remains quietly standing, regarding him sorrowfully.

"Mohammed, there are many who suffer, and yet do not break out into loud lamentations. Many a woman wails in the silence of her chamber ; the lamentation of many a young girl resounds, unheard and unheeded, through the harem. I know a girl, Mohammed Ali, who weeps and laments, because she well knows that one whom she looked upon and greeted in the holy stillness of the morning as though he were her lord, entering the harem for the first time—that this one wrongfully accuses her, calls her faithless ; yes, perhaps at this very moment, appeals to Allah for vengeance for a crime which she has not committed ; for a wrong that does not burden her soul ! "

"You know such a girl ? " he cries, with loud, mocking laughter. "You are fortunate in knowing her. I do not know such a girl ; I only know that they are all deceitful and traitorous."

"Then you assuredly do not know this one ! She is as pure as an angel, and her name is Masa."

"Masa ! " he exclaims, in loud and joyous tones. Then his countenance darkens, and, raising his clinched fists threateningly, he cries : "Masa ! you deceive yourself. Of all deceitful women she is the worst. Do not say that I deceive myself with regard to her ; I saw, with my own eyes, that which gives me death ; that which will forever gnaw at my heart. Away from me, and announce to her who sent you that no woman shall ever deceive Mohammed again."

He turns to descend from the rock, but the woman holds him fast, regarding him with an anxious, entreating look.

"Do you wish to kill my darling, the beloved child of my mistress ? Listen, Mohammed ! On her death-bed the mother confided to me her only child. Grasping her cold hand, I swore by Allah that I would hold her as my own, that I would watch over and guard her from all evil. This morning I found my darling in an agony of grief. She did not go out with the joyous crowd, but remained at home in her own little room. I saw her wringing her hands, and heard her entreating Allah to take her life. I entered her room and said to her: 'O Masa, you know that your Djumeila is true to you. Confide in her. Tell me all that grieves you. What is it that gives you pain?' After I had thus appealed to her for a long time, she arose from her knees, fell on my neck, and whispered in my ear a wondrous tale of the starry sky, of sunrise, and heavenly delight, of the bliss and pain of love. And I swore by Allah and the prophet, by the spirit of her mother, that I would never speak to another a word of what she had told me! But, because I love the child of my mistress, the child that is to me as my own, so dearly, I promised that I would go to the man she loves and tell him everything in her name."

"Then go seek him she loves! You will find him in the governor's palace; there he sits enthroned in the midst of his grand and brilliant harem. She longs to see the doors of this harem thrown open to her. Go to him and tell what you have to say. You will be welcome."

"I knew to whom I was to go, and I have already reached my destination. The heart of a woman who loves can see the absent like that of a sorceress. Masa said to me: 'Go up the rock to the highest point; there we vowed eternal fidelity to each other. I know he will be there! He will seek to wipe out the traces of our morning communion with his curses, perhaps, too, with his tears.' Now I am at the place to which Masa sent me, and here, too, is he to whom she sent me. Mohammed Ali, do not turn from me, do not shake your head. Rather let us sit down, and listen to what Djumeila has to say."

He did not reply. He only made a motion as if to shake off the hand she had laid on his arm, in order to draw him down to her side. But now against his will he permits her to draw him down to a seat on the stone beside her.

"Listen, Mohammed! Masa is at home, locked in her room. She weeps and laments, and has sworn to me by her mother's spirit that she would die to-night. The waves are to close over her if Mohammed does not rescue her from disgrace and misery. Listen, Mohammed, and take what I say to heart. Will you do so, Mohammed!"

"Well, then, I will!" said he, after a short pause. "May Allah judge you if you are about to deceive me again!"

"Then incline your ear closer to me, that the ghins may not hear what I say and carry it further. What Masa confided to me is intended for you only."

He inclines his head close to hers. For a long time she whispers and speaks to him in impressive tones; and he listens — at first against his will, but gradually a new life courses through his being, a delicate color suffuses itself over his pale cheeks, and his brow quivers with emotions of mingled joy and pain.

The woman continues to speak in low, earnest tones.

When she has finished, Mohammed bounds to his feet. Suddenly he is completely changed. His eyes sparkle, his lips smile and part to give utterance to a cry, to a loud, piercing, joyous cry, such as the eagle utters when he returns after a long journey and sees his young looking up and opening their beaks to greet him. He felt that he must cry out to relieve his breast. He extends his arms into the air, as though he saw before him the white dove, and wished to clasp it to his heart; as though he saw on the murmuring sea at his feet the swan approaching, singing to him the song of holy virgin purity and of chaste maidenly love.

"O how beautiful is the world!" he exclaims, exultingly. "How heavenly to live in it! But then this is not earthly delight, but the bliss of Paradise. I shall enter Paradise to-day, and be one of the blessed; I shall revel in heavenly joys already here on earth as man never did before. Come, Djumeila, and listen to my words. Come to this spot. See, here she stood this morning; here she exchanged with me vows of eternal fidelity, and this holy place I have consecrated with my tears and my despair. I was a fool; oh, forgive, Masa, forgive me, and I will repay you with life-long devotion. So long as a drop of blood flows in my veins will I love you and belong to you alone. Come, seat yourself beside me, Djumeila, and listen attentively to each word I shall speak to you."

CHAPTER VIII.

VANISHED.

THE inhabitants of Praousta had insisted on making the release of the sheik and the ulemas the occasion of general rejoicing, and the latter were compelled to yield to the general desire and take part in the festivities.

But it is well that evening is now come, and that the night is spreading her rest-bringing mantle over the earth. It is well that the opportunity has at last come to breathe freely in the stillness of one's chamber, and to thank Allah, with earnest prayer, for having given them a happy issue out of the cares and dangers of the preceding day.

The sheik has finished his prayer in the silence of his chamber. He now lightly ascends the stairway to the harem where his beloved child, his Masa, sojourns. Before the door of her chamber sits Djumeila, the faithful servant, and with upraised hand she motions to the sheik to step softly and make no noise, that Masa may not be disturbed.

"You know, master, that she has been complaining the whole day. Anxiety and care for you, and the pain and exposure she has endured, have made my dove ill, and she has gone to her room to rest and restore her strength. She therefore requests you, through me, to allow her to remain undisturbed until to-morrow morning. She has not been able to sleep at all during the day, and has continually wept and complained ; but at last toward evening she partook of some food and fell asleep. Yesterday she was so courageous and strong, but to-day she has been weak and dejected. Before going to sleep she called me to her bedside and told me to bear her greeting to her father ; and to say to him that she hoped to be entirely recovered by to-morrow morning, and would come down to breakfast to hand you, my master, your coffee and chibouque."

"It is well," said the sheik, softly. "Let my child rest, let my Masa sleep ; tread lightly, and be careful that you do not disturb her. I, too, feel that I need sleep. Let the whole house repose, and avoid making any noise before to-morrow morning. Then I will come to her room to see her."

The old man took off his shoes and noiselessly descended the stairway to his bed-chamber. It was now still in the house. All Praousta was silent. The people were resting from the pleasures of to-day, and the anxiety and care of yesterday.

In Cavalla, also, all was now quiet. The windows of the tschorbadji's palace were dark, and silence prevailed everywhere. The governor and his son Osman had retired to rest.

In the apartments occupied by Cousrouf Pacha darkness also prevails, and in the harem the blinds have been let down behind the latticed windows. One room alone is dimly lighted. On the table stands a silver lamp, which sheds a faint light through the spacious room, upon the gold-embroidered *caftan* of the pacha, and upon his proud, gloomy countenance. He rises from his seat, and walks hastily through the room. He then suddenly stands still. The pacha waits the arrival of the girl he has purchased with the blood-money given for her father.

All is quiet in the tschorbadji's palace, and also in the sheik's house. The windows are dark—the gate is locked. Now she will come: she has given her word; she has sworn by Allah; she has sworn by the spirit of her mother; she has sworn by all she holds sacred. She will come—for the daughter of Alepp knows that one who breaks a treble oath is doomed to inevitable destruction, and walks a welcome prey to the evil spirits, to the ghins. Surely, she will not dare to do this! She will come—she must come.

Something rustles in the garden. The pacha steps hastily to the window, throws it open, and looks out eagerly into the darkness. It is well that the moon is at this moment concealed by clouds; he might otherwise now see her coming up the walk from the end of the avenue. No, nothing approaches. It is not the beautiful virgin, with the eyes of the gazelle, with the light, airy step. How beautiful she is, how fair, how lovely! Is she not yet coming? Does he not hear approaching footsteps? No, neither of the eunuchs is stealthily approaching to announce to his mighty master that the virgin has entered the harem.

He stands and waits, his face quivering with anger and impatience. He is angry with the girl for daring to come so late. But come she will, and come she must; for whoever breaks the treble oath is lost before Allah and the prophet. He remains at the window, looking out into the quiet garden and dark night for a long time. The wind extinguishes the lamp that stands on the table. Now all is profound darkness. It is dark in the garden, and in the room. It is dark, too, in Cousrouf Pacha's breast.

"Woe to her, if she dares to break her oath! In that case, I will go, with my servants, in the broad light of day, to-morrow, to the sheik's house, and demand my property—my slave. Mine is she, for I purchased her with money which she accepted. Then, however, she shall not be my queen, but my slave—my servant. Come she shall, by Allah! I must possess her, for I love her with all the passion of my heart."

He bends forward, and listens attentively again. He hardly dares to breathe, and his heart throbs loudly as he anxiously gazes out into the garden. He does not notice that the hours are rapidly passing; to him it seems an eternity of waiting.

Without, at the garden-gate, the two watchful eunuchs are still standing. They, like their master, have been looking out into the darkness, and listening throughout the entire night.

"No sign of her yet," said one of the eunuchs to the other. "Woe to the girl if she dares to deceive our mighty master! She thinks, perhaps, he will abandon his claim. There will be a nice piece of work to be done to-morrow. Cousrouf Pacha, our mighty master, is not in the habit of being trifled with. He will send us down after his property, and there will be no lack of bloody heads in Praousta to-morrow; for we shall certainly have to regain possession of this slave. He says she accepted the purchase-money, and she therefore belongs to the master who bought her. Will she come, or shall we have to get possession of her by force to-morrow?"

"I hope she will come of her own accord," said the other. "These fishermen are so brave, and have such hard fists."

"And I hope she will not," said the first, laughing. "We must take her by force. I should relish just such a row. If they have hard fists, we have sharp, glittering weapons. And then, as you know, the soldiers are coming to take up their quarters here to-morrow; the tschorbadji will send a part of them to help us when the company arrives."

The pacha is still standing at the window, looking out into the night. He raises his hands threateningly, and his eyes glitter like those of the panther, lying in wait for his prey.

"Woe to her if she breaks the triple oath! Cousrouf Pacha will know how to avenge himself. She must become mine—she is mine already. I have bought this slave, and, by Allah, what I have bought I will also possess!"

At last, day dawns. The sun sends out into the heavens its purple heralds, and it begins to grow lighter in the garden. The pacha now sees a figure coming up the walk. It is one of the eunuchs. He goes noiselessly into the house, to his master.

"Has she come?" asks he, with quivering lips.

"No, master, she has not come. The path that leads up from the village is still empty. Shall we wait longer, master?"

"No," he gruffly replies. "Lock the gate and retire to the harem. It must be a misunderstanding; she supposed I meant the following evening. Go!"

The eunuch prostrates himself to the earth, and takes his departure, gliding stealthily out into the garden. When he feels assured that no one can see or hear him, he stands still, and laughs mockingly: "It is a great pleasure to see a grand gentleman now and then humiliated like the rest of us. He was terribly annoyed; I could tell it by his voice. Serves him right! I am delighted to see that grand gentlemen have to put up with disagreeable things sometimes, too—truly delighted."

With a sorrowful expression of countenance he now walks on down to the garden-gate, where the other eunuch is waiting, and tells him his gracious master has made his reckoning without his host, and that his purchased slave's failure to come has grieved him deeply.

They looked at each other, and the dawning light showed that they nodded triumphantly, with a malicious, mocking grin. They understood each other well, without telling in words what they were laughing about and rejoicing over.

The morning had come in its full splendor, and the town and village had again awakened to life and activity. The sheik, too, had arisen ; had already turned to the east, and finished his prayers, and repaired to his daughter's room. She had told him, through her servant, the evening before, that she would come to him early in the morning, to hand him his coffee and chibouque. But Masa did not come, and the father's heart is filled with an inexplicable feeling of anxiety. He hastily ascends the stairway. Djumeila no longer watches before the door ; she has gone, and is perhaps busied with her morning occupations.

The sheik opens the door of his daughter's sitting-room.

"Masa," he cries, "it is time to come down to breakfast." He supposes she is within, in her bedchamber, and has not heard him. "Masa," he cries again, "come out, my child, come to your father."

All is still as before. He calls for the third time ; no one replies.

"Masa, where are you, my child?" The sheik anxiously walks through the sitting-room to the little chamber where his daughter's bed stands : no one there either. "Masa, my child, my darling, where are you?"

He stands still, listening for an answer ; he breathes heavily when as yet no answer comes, but consoles himself with the thought that she has already gone down, and is awaiting him below, while he is seeking her in her rooms above.

Hastily, with the quick step of youth, the sheik descends the stairway again ; but Masa was not there. The father's calls grow louder and more anxious.

"Masa, where are you? My beloved child, come to your father."

All remains still. No answer comes to the father's anxious calls.

The sheik now hurries to the kitchen, where breakfast is being prepared ; Djumeila is standing there at the hearth, perfectly composed, attending to her cooking. She salutes her master with a deferential air.

"Where is Masa, my daughter?" cries the sheik.

"I do not know, master," she quietly replies; "I have not yet seen her to-day. Early in the morning, before sunrise, I went out to the meadow to milk the goats, that my child, my darling Masa, might have fresh sweet milk for her breakfast; since then I have been occupied with getting breakfast ready, and now you ask me 'Where is Masa?'"

"Spare your words and listen: Masa has vanished; Masa is not in her room."

Djumeila cries out loudly: "Where is Masa? where is my white dove?"

She rushes out and runs to her mistress's room; and, not finding her there, falls to weeping and wringing her hands in despair.

"Where is my beloved child? she is not with her father, she is not in her room." She then hastens to the other maidservant. "Where is Masa? has no one seen my master's daughter? has no one seen my beloved child?"

The sheik stood in the hall and listened to Djumeila's cries and the answer of the other servant. He then walked rapidly all over the house again, called his daughter's name loudly once more, and stood still to listen for an answer.

"But it is foolish to be so anxious. Masa is fond of going out to the sea to listen to the murmuring and whispering of the waves. My child is pious, and may have gone to the mosque to pray and to thank Allah. That is it—she has gone to the mosque."

The sheik rushes out into the street. It is well that the mosque is not far from his dwelling. The doors are open; Masa is surely there, probably on her knees in one of the recesses, addressing herself to her prayers. No, she is not there; the recesses are empty, and she is not up in the choir with the women either.

"She is nowhere in the mosque; but she may be down on the beach."

The sheik no longer felt the weight of his years, he no longer felt exhausted by the fatigues of the preceding day.

He is young again, and his blood is coursing through his veins. With head erect and firm footstep he walks down to the beach.

"Masa, my child, come to me; hasten to your father's arms!" he cries, so loudly that his voice drowns the noise of the rushing waves. But no one replies. Masa is not there.

A wild cry of terror resounds from his lips, he sinks down upon the shore exhausted, and stares out at the waves as though he would ask, "Have you seen my child; has she gone to you; has she sought a resting-place in your cold bosom?" Yet why should she do so? Masa is happy and loves her father, why does she then torment him thus? Masa must have gone to some of her neighbors. She has many friends; every woman and girl that Masa knows loves her on account of her happy disposition, her innocence, and her loveliness. She will have returned home long since. Djumeila cannot know that her master has gone out, or she would have called him.

"Masa is surely at home!"

The old man returns to his dwelling with the quick step of a youth. Djumeila is standing in the door-way, weeping and lamenting loudly:

"Master, my child, my Masa, is gone! Allah be merciful, and take me from this earth, now that my Masa is no longer here!"

The sheik says not a word. He neither speaks nor weeps, but only beckons to the men who have been drawn to the spot by Djumeila's loud lamentations. When they have come near, he bends down close to them, as if to prevent even the wind from hearing him, and whispers in their ears: "My child is gone. Masa is not in the mosque. Masa is not on the beach, and is not with the neighbors!"

The men regarded him with dismay; and, supposing they must have misunderstood his words, ask each other, "What did the sheik say?"

He then shrieks, as if to make himself heard by the heavens and the earth, by the mountains and the sea: "My child is gone! Masa is not in her father's house, Masa is not at the mosque, and not on the beach! Where is my child?"

He then swoons away. Djumcila now rushes down the street, and her cries of anguish resound through all Praousta.

"Masa, the sheik's daughter, has disappeared! Where is Masa? Up, ye men and women, let us search for her. Let us search everywhere—among the rocks and cliffs, in the hills and in the valleys. Masa, the sheik's daughter, is gone!"

From every house, men, women, and children, rush out and gaze at each other in sorrow and dismay. "Masa, our sheik's daughter, has vanished! let us search for her." And now they begin the search. People are to be seen running in every direction—to the rocks above, down to the shore. The air everywhere resounds with their loud cries:

"Masa, daughter of the sheik, where are you?"

Suddenly the music of the trumpet, cymbal and fife, and the roll of the drum, breaks in upon and mingles with these tumultuous cries. With warlike music the company of soldiers from the nearest city marches into Praousta, in accordance with the command given by the governor to his captain.

The men have been on the march all night, and now enter the village in the broad light of day, with their band playing.

The military music rings out so loud and clear that the cries of lamentation are no longer heard. The crowd stand still and gaze at the gaudily-attired men who are marching into Cavalla. The tschorbadji is standing with his distinguished guest, Cousrouf Pacha, in the court-yard of the palace. He has requested him to be present at the reception of the soldiers. The pacha's countenance and bearing are unchanged—all haughtiness and dignity—only his cheeks are paler and his glance more threatening than usual. As he now turns toward the gate of the court-yard, Mohammed Ali, the boulouk bashi, appears for the first time, attired in his handsome, glittering uniform, advancing with his company toward the palace. On the governor's left stands his son Osman, who has risen from his couch, overcoming for the moment his weakness and ill-health in order to participate in the triumph of witnessing Mohammed Ali lead his company, as boulouk bashi, for the first time.

Yes, there comes Mohammed Ali, marching at the head of his company, to the sound of the martial music. He holds his sword uplifted in his right hand, and salutes the governor as he approaches by lowering its point to the ground with a deferential glance. He recognizes his friend, and Osman joyously returns the greeting. Mohammed seems to him entirely changed at this moment, his figure taller and more powerful. His countenance is manly and joyous, his eyes sparkle with a mysterious fire, a smile plays about his lips, and his whole bearing is firm and commanding.

It is not Osman alone who sees this change. Cousrouf Pacha has also observed it. His countenance darkens. He compresses his lips as if to repress a curse that is struggling for utterance. Yet he retains his air of indifference and grave countenance, though his cheeks grow a shade paler, and his brow somewhat darker.

The band plays a lively air. Mohammed conducts his soldiers before the eyes of the governor and his guest through a series of movements and evolutions which he has long since practiced in secret. As they now advance toward him, "Right about, halt!" resounds Mohammed's word of command; and his soldiers stand there like a wall.

"Well done," said Cousrouf Pacha, with a gracious inclination of the head. He then added in a loud voice, in order that Mohammed should hear him: "You see, governor, street boys can watch soldiers exercising to some purpose. Mohammed has not stared at them on the street in vain."

He turns and leaves the court-yard, repairs to his private apartments, and calls the two eunuchs who had held the fruitless watch at the gate the previous night.

"When the soldiers have left the court-yard, twelve of their number will be placed at your disposal. Let them load their muskets and unsheath their swords. Then go to Praousta, to the sheik's house, and demand the restoration of my slave. Demand it in my name. If her father refuses, search the house and every place connected with it. Break open the doors if he refuses to unlock them. If you do not find her there, search the other houses of the village. I must have her! If you do not find her to-day, then find her to-morrow or the next day. I will allow you a week's time in which to get possession of this runaway slave. If you do not return her, your heads shall fall! Remember that! Stop, one thing more: observe and watch the new boulouk bashi. Select some of my servants to follow him day and night, and to observe every thing he does, yet without letting him become aware of it, for he is a shrewd lad and a daring one, too. Now, you can go."

While the company is still standing drawn up in the courtyard, the tschorbadji beckons Mohammed Ali to his side, and enters the palace with him.

"Mohammed, it is evident that you will become a brave and efficient soldier. You have courage; now learn to control your anger, to govern yourself, and then you will know how to command others. See, this purse filled with gold-pieces is the captain's salary for three months, which I pay in advance, as the young boulouk bashi will have to incur some necessary expenses, and will therefore be glad to accept a payment in advance."

Mohammed thanked the governor, and received the first salary of his new dignity with perfect composure, though a sudden sparkling in his eyes indicated how much he rejoiced over it.

Osman, however, can read his friend's countenance well. As the governor turns away, Osman throws his arms around Mohammed's neck and whispers in his ear: "You stand there radiant like a hero, and all the bliss of the world and of love, too, is reflected in your countenance. O Mohammed, father says you should learn to control yourself, and I am satisfied you can. When my friend is harassed with sorrow and care his countenance bears no evidence of it, but happiness is not to be repressed and driven back to the heart in this way. It illumines the face of man like the sun. But I warn you, Mohammed, it is sometimes dangerous to let one's countenance shine so. It easily awakens suspicion in the breast of an enemy, and he meditates revenge. Beware! Beware!"

Mohammed regards his friend as though he did not understand him.

"What do you mean, Osman?"

"Nothing, nothing at all, Mohammed, except that it is sometimes dangerous to allow one's happiness to be observed. Bear this in mind, my friend, and draw a veil over your radiant countenance."

CHAPTER IX.

WHERE IS SHE?

IN Praousta, all was again uproar and confusion. Eight eunuchs of the mighty pacha, Cousrouf, accompanied by a detachment of twelve soldiers, came down from Cavalla at noon. They went directly to the house of the sheik, and demanded to see him.

Djumeila, her eyes red with weeping, came to the door and told them her master was ill with grief and anxiety on account of the disappearance of his daughter.

The eunuchs pushed her aside, and penetrated, in spite of her cries and attempts to bar their passage, into the room where the sheik lay on his divan, with pallid face and staring gaze. His lamentations were heartrending. His quivering lips continually cried: "Where is my daughter, where is my child?"

They roughly forced him to his feet, and with savage threats demanded of the old man that he should deliver over to them their master's slave, his daughter Masa. Aroused from his torpor, he stares at them in amazement:

"Slave!" cried he. "And you call her Masa, and my daughter; and you say it is she? Who calls Masa, daughter of the sheik, his slave?"

"Our master does," said they—"our master, Cousrouf Pacha."

"How can the stranger dare to call the daughter of a free man, a free girl, his slave?"

"He dares do it because it is so," replied the eunuchs, shrugging their shoulders; "Masa sold herself to his excellency, our gracious master, to Cousrouf Pacha, when she procured your release by paying the second tax. You thought it was done out of kindness. No, Masa sold herself to our gracious master, Cousrouf Pacha, for one hundred gold sequins."

"That is false ; you lie, you wretches ! You lie in all you say ! You lie !" cried the sheik. He now stood erect, regarding them threateningly. "Do not dare to speak to me thus again ! Justice and law still live ! No one can say that Masa, my daughter, is a slave ; and may he who says it stand accursed before Allah and the prophets !"

The two eunuchs threw themselves upon him and held him fast. They then called two of the soldiers to their assistance, and bound him hand and foot. This done, they threw the old man contemptuously down upon his divan, and proceeded to ransack every part of the house in search of Masa, their master's runaway slave.

There lay the sheik, bound and helpless, groaning and lamenting : "I am mad ! I hear that which is not. I hear voices say that which cannot be. No, I am mad ! It is impossible that Masa, the daughter of the Sheik of Praousta, is the slave of the stranger Turk ! Impossible that I can have heard such a thing ! Death or even madness is approaching me. It creeps stealthily toward me and stares at me wildly. O Masa, my daughter, come save your father !"

About him all was still, but in the rooms above was an uproar. He heard the heavy footsteps in the upper apartments. into which, until now, no man save the father had ever entered. They are going from room to room, throwing the daughter's things about, ransacking her bedchamber, overthrowing furniture, and looking under carpets and mattresses. searching everywhere for the only daughter of the poor sheik. Then they go to the yard, to the stables. Masa is sought everywhere. But, Allah be praised, she cannot be found !

Without, before the door, stand the men and women of the village in a wide circle, gazing with dismay upon the eunuchs and the twelve soldiers, who now come out of the door, fall in line before the house, and demand of the people to tell them where Masa, the sheik's daughter, is.

"We know not. We have not seen her. How can we tell you what has become of Masa, the sheik's only daughter?

She was as pure and good as ever girl was. No one looked at her. Who can tell where she is?"

"This is all pretence. Enough! we will go from house to house and search for Masa!"

With cries of rage the men attempt to oppose them, but the strange soldiers who have just arrived know no pity. They use their swords vigorously upon those who oppose them; the sight of blood terrifies the others, and the cries of the wounded silence them. The eunuchs' soldiers are allowed to enter each house, for the men of Praousta are too poor to be able to provide for more than one wife, and the poor man's wife has no separate, secluded apartments. She goes about in the house unveiled, and attends to her domestic occupations while her husband is out hunting or fishing. The search of the eunuchs and soldiers for the girl is therefore easily conducted; in each house there is but one wife and she is unveiled, as are also the children; the maidens, however, timidly shrink back and draw their veils more closely about them. The strange soldiers, however, do not go so far in their boldness as to raise the veils of the girls. And what would it avail them to do so? Neither they nor the eunuchs have ever seen the face of the sheik's daughter.

"It is useless to search farther," murmured the eunuchs, after having looked through the last house in the village, without finding Masa. "It is useless. It was useless to look for her elsewhere than in the sheik's house, and there we did not find her. The law forbids our doing more, and the tschorbadji, when he placed the soldiers at the disposal of our gracious master, and ordered them to accompany us, expressly commanded that we should not enrage the men of Praousta to desperation, or to any thing contrary to law."

"But remember, brother," said the other eunuch, "what our master said. We must bring him back this runaway slave or we lose our heads! And truly I would much rather keep my head on my shoulders than have it rolled to the ground."

"And so would I mine," said the first. "Therefore we will do all we can to get possession of this slave. A week is a long time, and I hardly think we shall have to wait so long."

"There is one other matter we must not lose sight of," murmured the first eunuch, as they ascended the stairway to Cavalla, followed by the soldiers. "We are to watch the crazy young captain, the boulouk bashi, and report all he does, to our master. It seems to me there may be some connection between the young boulouk bashi and the flight of the slave. Let us keep our eyes open, for our heads are at stake."

And with gloomy looks they presented themselves to their master on their return to the palace, to inform him that they had made thorough search for Masa in the sheik's house, and had not found her.

"And have you nothing to report concerning the young man, Mohammed Ali?" asked the pacha.

The eunuchs informed him that they had not yet seen him, having as yet been wholly occupied with their search for the escaped slave; they would, however, have something to report to his excellency concerning the boulouk bashi on the following morning, or that very evening, perhaps.

"Who knows where Mohammed Ali now is?"

"He has not been seen at the palace since the reception of the soldiers in the court-yard."

"He must have gone to the hut his mother once occupied, as he often does when he wishes to be alone."

Of late he had been absent less than usual, having promised his friend Osman to live and stay with him. But now that he is captain of a company, it would perhaps not become him to remain at the palace as the tschorbadji's guest; for this reason he would probably go to his own hut to take up his abode there. Yes, he has passed the night in his own little house, and he has just quitted it and walked into the main street of the city, on his way to the store of the merchant Lion.

The merchant saw him coming, and hastened forward to congratulate him on the high honor conferred upon him, and to rejoice over the stately appearance of the young man, who pleased him well in his uniform, with his sword at his side.

"Truly a beautiful uniform, Mohammed Ali, and I have but one regret, and that is, that your mother, Sitta Khadra, is not here to see you in your magnificence. How she would rejoice to see her son, her heart's darling, her Mohammed Ali, in all his glory!"

"I, too, wish my dear mother, Sitta Khadra, were here now," said Mohammed, with a sigh. "I have never before missed and needed her as much as now; and you are right, too, in thinking she would rejoice could she see me now. Yes, with all her heart, Mr. Lion. Ah life, were beautiful indeed, if Death were not always standing threateningly before us! He takes from us what we love most, and esteem highest; we must ever be on our guard against him, and keep our door barred that he may not steal into our midst and rob us of some fair life."

The merchant regards him with amazement. He has never heard the young boulouk bashi talk in this sentimental manner before, and it surprises him too, to see his countenance so changed—so radiant, serene, and cloudless, the chaste, thoughtful brows—so bright, the flash of his large brown eyes.

"Mohammed, my young friend, what bliss has Fortune bestowed on you? Tell your friend the secret; for, truly all that concerns and pleases you, gladdens my own heart. Tell me what has worked this change in you?"

"And you still ask? You see me in my uniform—in my glory, as you call it—it is this that has worked the change!"

The merchant shook his head. "No, it is not that, Mohammed Ali; that which sparkles in your eyes, and resounds from your lips in such joyous words, has nothing to do with your uniform or with your new dignity. It must be something entirely different; yet, if you do not wish to tell me, I will ask you no further. May Allah be with you in all things, and I will entreat the same of my God. I think and trust both will hear the prayer, for they are one and the same, after all. Now, my young friend, come into my store with me and let us chat with each other while we smoke the *nargile*, and refresh ourselves with a cup of coffee.—Ho! ye lads; Admeh, bring us coffee and the nargile, with some of the finest tobacco—some of that intended for the sultana at Stamboul, that is to be sent off to-morrow. There is great joy in my house to-day, for Mohammed Ali, the young boulouk bashi, is here."

He seats himself on a cushion covered with Persian carpet, and requests Mohammed to seat himself on another at his side. He does as requested, but it does not escape the merchant's observant eye that he conforms to this hospitable usage with impatience, and does not wish to remain long. He therefore does not urge him to remain when he, after a short time, rises and asks the merchant to go with him to the store.

He wishes to buy all sorts of things. He has received his first salary from the tschorbadji to-day, and desires to spend a portion of it for some of the pretty things of which there are such quantities and varieties in the merchant's store.

"It depends on what you wish, Mohammed. Is it carpets or cushions? or is it female attire or jewelry? Do you want mirrors, embroidered veils, or silken shawls? What is it you want?"

Somewhat confused and embarrassed, Mohammed looks at the merchant and hardly knows what to say.

"Then let me have a carpet; I wish to spread it out in my room. I have, until now, changed nothing in my hut, but have left it just as it was when Sitta Khadra lived in it. Now, however, it seems to me that it would not perhaps become the boulouk bashi to continue to live so wretchedly."

"Yes, the old story—with office comes pride," said the merchant, laughing. "The boulouk bashi, of course, needs carpets and all sorts of furniture. Here is an arm-chair inlaid with mother-of-pearl; does it suit? Here are Persian carpets; the colors are a little faded, and you can have them at a low price."

"No, nothing with faded colors. Let me have your most beautiful carpet! Let the ground be white and covered with flowers, with roses and violets; and I wish, too, they could have life and fragrance!"

"Oho, Mr. Boulouk Bashi!" cried the merchant, laughing, and raising his finger threateningly. "Now the secret is out; you are in love! This carpet is not for yourself, but for some beautiful woman. Ah, yes, I have heard something about this affair before, and now I know it is true."

"What have you heard, sir? What is it that is said of me?" asked Mohammed, gravely, his countenance suddenly darkening.

"Well, people ask why it is that Osman, the tschorbadji's son, is so very affectionate to you, and why the governor himself has always so distinguished you, and now made you boulouk bashi?"

"I had supposed it was because I deserved it," said Mohammed, hastily, "and I thought Osman showed his affection because he loved the friend who had grown up with him."

"He assuredly does love you, and the tschorbadji also rewards you on account of your merit, or he would not have done so at all, and would not have chosen you for what he desires of you."

"And what does he desire of me? For what has he chosen me?"

"It is said he wishes you to become the husband of the beautiful Marina, his niece."

"I do not even know this lady," said Mohammed, shrugging his shoulders.

"You do not know her, but she perhaps knows you," said the merchant, smiling. "She is very beautiful, it is said. She is married, as you are aware, to my rival, the merchant across the street. I have observed that this fair lady opens her shutters, to peep out at Mohammed, whenever he passes by. The neighbors say this is why her husband has become jealous, and threatens to drive her away, if she continues to look after the young men. You now perceive, Mohammed, that Marina, the tschorbadji's niece, has an eye on you, and perhaps even two, and that her husband knows it. The peace of the house has thus been broken on your account, and the people say the tschorbadji will now take his niece home again, and that you are to marry her afterward. It is a good match, Mohammed, a very good match. I shall be disappointed if you do not marry this lady. She is rich, very rich; and are you aware that, with your epaulets, your uniform, and your handsome sword, you must have money. Moreover, my son, he who intends to rise in the world must have a great deal of money! It is not through his own merit that a man is advanced. If he is poor, he remains in the dust. You know I have offered to assist you, but you refused me because you did not wish to accept benefits, and you were right. My advice you can, however, accept; and my advice is, marry the beautiful, the rich Marina, when her husband divorces her, and sufficient time has elapsed. She is very young, younger than you; my young friend Mohammed numbers eighteen years, and the tschorbadji's young niece only fifteen. Take my advice, and preserve your heart until it is time to let its wings grow, and then stretch out your hand after the fair Marina."

"Thanks for your advice," cried Mohammed, laughing.

Never before had the merchant heard him laugh so heartily; never before had he seen him make such a display of his white teeth. Until to-day, Mohammed had been a remarkably grave youth. What can it be that makes him look so joyous and laugh so heartily all of a sudden?

"Let us, however, hear no more about this fair Marina. I do not know her, and have never seen her. That is to say, I may have seen her once or twice, with Osman, when we happened to pass the veiled woman and her husband on the street; and I believe she did stand still and look after us. I thought, at the time, it was on Osman's account, and probably it was. How could the rich lady have turned to look at the poor lad Mohammed Ali? And now to other matters. Show me goods, show me carpets, and I want the best and the handsomest. The carpet is to lie where my mother's mat once lay, and on which she died; and this spot cannot be too handsomely adorned. Therefore, give me a costly carpet."

"Let it be just as you say," said the merchant, smiling. He then called his servants, and ordered them to bring down his handsomest carpets, and spread them out before the young captain, in order that he might select one.

"You want nothing else, only a carpet?"

Mohammed turned his head a little to one side, and avoided meeting the merchant's keen gaze. "O yes, a number of other things. I want some table-ware, cups, glasses, and the like. I also want," he continued talking rapidly, and with forced indifference, "I also want a warm woollen cloak, such as women wear. I promised a cloak to an old friend of my mother. Give me a warm woollen cloak."

The merchant made no reply. He only smiled significantly, and brought out the goods; dark, plain goods, such as became an old woman, and a friend of poor Sitta Khadra.

But Mohammed promptly rejected it. That would not be nice enough for a present. He wanted better, finer material, and in lighter colors.

The merchant expressed no astonishment, but silently brought out finer goods. Mohammed selected the very handsomest cloak for the old friend of his deceased mother. Finally, he timidly asked for finger-rings and bracelets.

"Also for the old friend of your good mother Khadra?" inquired the merchant, with an air of mock gravity.

Mohammed did not reply; he had probably not heard him. He quietly selected, from the box handed him, a beautiful ring set with a precious stone, then four beautiful cups and saucers of the finest Chinese porcelain, and a variety of other articles necessary for housekeeping. He concluded by demanding a pair of pillows and coverlids.

Mr. Lion asks no more questions; he now knows that Mohammed intends to marry, and is furnishing his house. He is satisfied, and lets his young friend have all he has selected at half the price he would have charged other purchasers.

Mohammed joyfully paid the price, and gazed at the beautiful articles he had purchased, with sparkling eyes.

"If you wish it, Mohammed," said the merchant, "I will send a servant with you."

"Thank you; I am going to my house, and he can accompany me with the things."

Mohammed took leave of the merchant, and left the store, the servant following heavily laden.

After a few moments Mohammed, however, turned, and came back to the merchant, who was standing on the threshold looking after him.

"One thing more, dear sir. You are my friend, and, as I well know, mean well by me," said he, in low, hasty tones.

"Certainly, Mohammed Ali, and gladly would I prove to you my friendship."

"You can do so; tell no one of my purchases—no one," replied Mohammed with a look of entreaty.

The merchant promised to be silent on the subject.

"Thank you, kind friend. I am happy; yet all depends on Allah's blessing."

He pressed the merchant's hand once more, and walked out, hastily beckoning to the servant, who had remained standing in the street, to follow him. He then walked on to the little hut of his mother Khadra.

He pushes open the door, and the servant follows him into the room. The bundle is laid on the floor, on the place where his mother died, and Mohammed generously and proudly, like a man of rank, hands the servant a gratuity, and bids him return. He walks off well pleased, and Mohammed is now left alone in his mother's hut.

An old woman is sitting just opposite the hut. She was there when he entered, smoking a short pipe, her arms crossed on her knees. She looked about carelessly, only now and then casting a glance at the house of the young boulouk bashi, who had locked himself in.

Mohammed had thought nothing of her presence. What cared he for the old woman there on the stone, smoking her pipe?

When, after a short time, he steps out of his hut, she stretches out her hand and begs for alms.

Hardly looking at her, he draws a copper coin from his pocket, gives it to her and walks on.

The old woman keeps her seat, and mutters a few words to herself.

Mohammed walks on rapidly.

A boy is skipping along on the other side of the street, whistling a merry air.

What does this concern Mohammed? He walks on down the street on the one side, the boy follows him on the other.

Mohammed heeds the boy as little as he had heeded the old woman. What does he care for the boy, who seems wholly absorbed in his musical efforts?

He entered the store of the merchant, who dealt in all kinds of provisions; in olives, meats, chocolate, sugar, and eggs. Mohammed purchases some of all these articles, and it amuses and astonishes the merchant to see the young officer become, of a sudden, his own housewife. But he does not venture to say so, or ask any questions ; Mohammed's grave looks and bearing forbid any attempt at raillery.

A servant is ordered to put the things in a basket, and take them to his house.

As he walks out of the store again, he hears the boy's shrill whistling in the distance. He pays no attention to this, and walks on quietly. The whistling suddenly ceases, and the boy, who had posted himself in the vicinity, so that Mohammed could not see him on coming out, now runs after him, stepping close to the basket in passing ; he casts a quick, searching glance at the articles it contained, as if taking note in expectation of being called on to give an account of its contents.

The old woman is still sitting opposite Mohammed's house, reposing there, apparently, after smoking her pipe. Her head is thrown back, resting against the door, and her eyes are closed ; she seems to be sleeping.

CHAPTER X.

THE DEPARTURE.

A NEW and great event occupied the attention of the inhabitants of Cavalla and Praousta on the following morning. A large and magnificent ship had entered the harbor during the night, a vessel of the Turkish navy : its dark-red flag, with the grand-sultan's crown on its dark field, showed it to be such. The sailors were attired in glittering uniforms, and on the deck stood a tent embroidered with gold, beneath it a luxurious couch of swelling cushions. The ship was still handsomer than the one on which Cousrouf Pacha had arrived three years before. But then he had come to Cavalla as an exile, and had not been sent away with the same ceremony with which they were now prepared to welcome him back. For it is already known, and the intelligence has rapidly spread, that this ship has come from Stamboul to convey Cousrouf Pacha back to his home ; and, therefore, was it so festively decorated with flags, and carpets, and garlands of flowers.

His friend the grand-admiral, Hussein Pacha, has been working in his interest, and the sunlight of his master's favor is once more shed upon the head of the exile.

With great dignity Cousrouf received the captain, who bowed profoundly before him, while those who accompanied him threw themselves upon the ground, touching the earth with their foreheads. He received the imperial missive with perfect composure, opened it, and inclined his head with a gracious expression of countenance, as though he were dispensing and not receiving a favor.

"'Tis well, captain—I am ready! Our most gracious emperor and master has written to me, and as he *wishes*"—(he emphasized this word; the sultan only expresses a wish, he does not command Cousrouf Pacha)—"as he wishes me to return to Stamboul with all convenient speed, keep every thing in readiness to sail."

"Will your excellency sail to-day?" asked the captain.

Cousrouf Pacha slowly shook his head. "I do not know. It may be to-day, and yet it may not be possible to depart for a week. It depends on circumstances which I cannot entirely control; but keep every thing in readiness, as I may, should matters take a favorable turn, be enabled to depart at any hour."

Walking backward, his head profoundly inclined, the captain quits the saloon; his suite creep out on their knees.

Cousrouf stands haughtily erect, gazing proudly after them. When they had gone out, he utters a cry, a command, and a side-door opens, and two of his eunuchs, his confidants, enter the room.

"Make your report!" he exclaims, sternly, as he raises his hand threateningly, and then lets it fall again to his side. "Tell me, dogs; where is the runaway slave?"

They threw themselves on their knees before him, and crossed their arms on their breasts.

"O lord and master, we do not know."

"You do not know, you dogs? Then you are determined to be chastised?" cries the pacha. "You have no trace of her whatever?"

"No, O master; not as yet."

"Yet you are aware that I have only given you seven days' time? If you do not restore her to me within that time, your heads fall! You have not forgotten that?"

"No, master, we have not forgotten it."

"You are wise," said the pacha, quietly. "What about Mohammed Ali; have you caused his movements to be closely watched?"

"Yes, master, we have done so."

"Then speak," commanded the pacha, falling back on his cushions with closed eyes, slowly smoking his chibouque, and opening his lips from time to time to allow a whiff of smoke to curl slowly upward. "Your report, dogs!"

With ready tongues the eunuchs reported all the old woman and boy had observed.

"Continue," commanded the pacha, as they both ceased speaking, "continue."

"Master, we have nothing further to report."

"You are a couple of blockheads," observed their gracious master. "Goods, table-ware, provisions—you know nothing else."

"No, lord and master, we know of nothing else."

"But the one thing, the most important, tell me: where did the boulouk bashi pass the night?"

"Master, we believe he passed it in his house."

"You only believe it? This night you must know. But take notice of this: Be careful not to injure himself or his property. His person and his property shall not be touched: this I have sworn. Yet know this: If you do not tell me to-morrow morning where the boulouk bashi has passed the night, you shall both receive the bastinado, and after such a fashion that you will find walking anything but pleasant, and yet I will have you driven through the city in search of the information you are so slow in getting."

With a gesture of the hand he motioned to them to leave the room, and they withdrew as they had entered, on their knees. After closing the door behind them, they jumped hastily to their feet.

"The bastinado! Did you hear?" asked the one. "We must find out at every cost where the boulouk bashi passes the night. But how can we? We are neither to injure his property, nor to touch him or what belongs to him. We are not allowed to open his door or break into his house; what are we to do?"

"I have thought of something," said the other. "Come, I will tell you. Let us get everything ready."

Dark clouds covered the heavens, shutting out the light of the moon and stars, and night sank down over the earth earlier than usual.

The people had retired to rest, and the houses were dark. Suddenly a bright light illumined the surrounding darkness, and cries for help resounded through the air. The house that stood opposite Mohammed's is enveloped in flames, and its occupants rush out yelling and screaming for help.

The old woman and the boy ran over the way and knocked at the window-shutters of the young boulouk bashi.

"Come out, come out, Mohammed Ali! Save yourself! Your house has commenced to burn!"

All was still in the house, as though Mohammed knew the voice lied, that there was no danger, and that he could sleep on quietly.

They knock at the shutters, they shake the door, but all remains silent within; the light of the fire does not awake him, the cries do not reach his ear. He is not there; he is assuredly not passing the night in his house. It has certainly been set on fire in vain; the poor people have sacrificed their property, and the spies have failed to discover where Mohammed Ali has passed the night.

On the following morning howls and lamentations are heard in the lower apartments of the harem; from time to time the sound of blows can be distinguished, and then again howls and cries of pain.

No one dares inquire into the cause of these outcries, for in his own apartments Cousrouf Pacha is master, and even the governor would not venture to call him to account for his treatment of his own servants.

Osman lay on his cushions in the little portion of his garden that had alone been reserved for the use of himself and father, since Cousrouf Pacha had been occupying the remainder with his harem. He heard the howls and cries of pain that came from the harem, and bowed his head in sadness.

"These poor wretches must suffer for it!" he murmured to himself.

But suddenly his countenance brightens, as he sees his friend approaching in his glittering uniform, and he extends both hands to greet him.

"I am delighted to see you, Mohammed, after this long absence!"

"As I am you!" said the latter, his countenance radiant with smiles. "Forgive me for not having come to see you all day yesterday. I was so busy with my soldiers, and still more so with myself, Osman! I have had much to learn to keep the soldiers from observing that I was a mere beginner in the art of war."

"And that is all you have to say in excuse for your conduct?" said Osman, looking searchingly into his friend's countenance.

"That is all," replied he, hastily, endeavoring to look his friend full in the face. But he could not, and looked aside.

Osman notices this, and nods his head with a smile full of meaning.

"Pray seat yourself at my side Mohammed? Let me throw my arm around your neck, and then listen to me, my friend. Offer no resistance, for I must confess that your friend Osman has been employing spies for some time past, and he knows more than Mohammed supposes, and much more than Cousrouf Pacha dreams of."

"What do you know?" asked Mohammed, trembling slightly. "I pray you tell me, Osman!"

"Listen, Mohammed," said Osman, bending toward him, in a low voice. "Lamentations have just resounded from the interior of the pacha's harem. Two of his eunuchs have received the bastinado, and do you know why? Because they could not inform him where Mohammed Ali passed the last and the preceding night."

"For that reason?" asked Mohammed. "I was in my house. If Cousrouf Pacha had himself asked me, I should have told him I was there!"

Osman gently shook his head. "No, Mohammed, you were not in your house; and Cousrouf Pacha well knows you were not. Do you know why? He lighted a lamp to look for you."

"A lamp!" asked Mohammed.

"Yes, a lamp! And do you know what this lamp consisted of? Of the house that stood opposite yours. They set it on fire, and knocked at your doors and window shutters to awaken you.—And, if you had been there, you would have heard the outcries of the people, and would assuredly have gone to their assistance. No, Mohammed, you were not in your house last night!"

"I was above, on the summit of the rock," said Mohammed, hastily, and in a somewhat embarrassed manner.

"No," said Osman, gently. "You forget, Mohammed, that you came down in the evening with the four pigeons you had shot, and you also forget that you went on down to Praousta as it grew dark."

"No," said Mohammed, hastily, "no, that I did not do!"

"Yes, you did, my friend," said Osman, quietly. "A cripple stood by the way-side, whom you brushed against in passing by; he cursed you, and followed you for a while, continually cursing, but you walked on without heeding him."

Mohammed looked at him in dismay. "How do you know all this?"

"I told you before that I had spies who watched both you and the pacha. I employ them because I love and wish to protect my Mohammed!" He placed his lips close to his ear, and whispered: "To protect you and the white dove that has sought safety in your bosom. Be still! Do not deny me this favor! Consider that your happiness is also that of your friend, and that he watches over you when you are imprudent in the rashness of your overflowing bliss. Listen, Mohammed! You went down to the sea-shore, to the secret place among the cliffs, known only to you and me! Do you not remember the time when, filled with anxiety on your account, we were seeking you in that vicinity, and Mr. Lion saw you creep out of a crevice in the rocks? You afterward pointed out to me the place to which it led, and—"

"For Heaven's sake, mention to no one that there is a cave there, and that you know the way to it!" said Mohammed, anxiously.

"Did I not tell you that I was watching over you?" said his friend, gently. "No one shall hear of it, only be careful yourself that no one sees you enter it. You are surrounded by spies. Cousrouf Pacha is called away, and the ship lies in the harbor awaiting him. And do you know what he told the captain who asked him if he would sail to-day? He replied: 'It is uncertain, it depends on circumstances not entirely within my control.' Do you know what that means? He will not sail until he has discovered and punished Masa, the runaway slave, as he calls her. Do you know the nature of the punishment administered to runaway female slaves, and to women who have been guilty of infidelity to their masters?"

Mohammed shuddered. "By Allah, Osman, you do not mean to say that the pacha would carry out here, with us, where the cruel laws of the harem are unknown, the punishment administered to runaway female slaves among the Turks?"

Osman nodded in assent. "You must know, Mohammed, that the commander, now fully restored to the favor of the imperial majesty, in Stamboul, has the right, wherever he may be, to punish his slaves, that is, his property, as he pleases. To save her father, Masa made herself his property. We, my father and I, were witnesses, when she received the money, and when he said to her: 'Here is the money you asked me for! I give it gladly, but you know what I give it for, and you have agreed to the bargain!'"

"O unhappy woman!" groaned Mohammed.

"Be still, my Mohammed!" said Osman, in warning tones. "Be on your guard! You are beset with spies, for these eunuchs are battling for their lives. If they have not restored Masa alive to their master in a week, their heads fall; he has sworn this, and they know he will keep his word. They are cunning, and have sharp eyes. Mohammed, if you can avoid it, do not go down into the grotto to-day. Every thing depends on deceiving the spies and putting them on a false track. Therefore, pass the night in your own house."

"Impossible ! quite impossible !" said Mohammed, his eyes kindling at the thought of his love. "It cannot be, even if it should cost my heart's blood ! I cannot remain in my house."

"Then remain with me. Do so for her sake. I tell you your white dove is in danger ! I am better informed than the rest, for I have in my service a spy, a good angel, whose eyes rest neither by day nor night, and whose ears hear every thing that concerns Mohammed Ali."

"And who is this angel ?" asked Mohammed.

"You know her well," said Osman. "It is Marina, my dear cousin. She often goes into the pacha's harem, and has formed the acquaintance of two of the young women, who tell her a great many things in their thoughtlessness. Nothing escapes Marina's ear, for I will confess, my friend, that she loves the young boulouk bashi, and is ready to separate herself from her jealous husband on his account. But I candidly told her that he did not love her, and that she must bury her wishes. She wept long, Mohammed, but when she had dried her eyes, she said she loved him so dearly that she would do all that lay in her power to secure his happiness, and that she would watch over him as his friend."

"She is a noble woman," said Mohammed. "Bear my greeting to her, but I pray you tell her nothing more concerning me."

"You may rest assured," said Osman. "We do not confide our dearest secrets to women, for we are not always certain of their silence. She knows nothing, except that the pacha is your enemy, and that the latter has told these women that he is seeking an opportunity to destroy you. You have often offended him with your hasty words and threatening manner, and Cousrouf Pacha is not the man to pardon any offence. Marina is well aware of this, and therefore observes and listens to everything."

"Does Cousrouf Pacha know that there is any connection between me and Masa ?"

"Yes, he is a close observer, and, on the morning of the flight, he read in your countenance, as I also did, that there was no happier man in Cavalla than Mohammed Ali. But yesterday his countenance was gloomy, to-day it is radiant. Cousrouf Pacha did not fail to divine the cause of this sudden transformation. Therefore be on your guard, my friend, and wait until it is dark and all are asleep before you go to your cave."

"I will do so; I will be careful, Osman—I swear it. Accept my warmest thanks for your care and watchfulness. Allah will some day enable me to prove my gratitude, and will also permit you to be a witness of your friend's happiness. And now, farewell, and to-morrow, if it be Allah's will, I shall return to you in joyousness and safety."

"May Allah grant it!" said Osman. "Allah be with you, and the prophet illumine your heart! One thing more, my Mohammed: Lovers, it is said, are forgetful; the warning voice easily escapes their hearing, and with open eyes they dream blissful dreams which make them oblivious of reality. It may therefore be well to arouse them sometimes, and I will try to awaken my dear dreamer. If you hear the report of a pistol in the night, consider that it is Osman warning you to be on your guard. But if two other shots soon after follow the first, this signal shall announce that danger threatens, and that I am calling you. In that case, come to me at once, no matter what time of night it may be. I shall await you. Now you may go, my friend, and Allah be with you!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRIPLE OATH.

"WE must assure his safety," murmured Osman, as he looked after his friend, who was hastily leaving the garden. "His life must at least be sacred, and I will go at once with my father to Cousrouf Pacha. It is a sacrifice, for I hate this proud, overbearing man. He seems to consider himself as conferring a favor when he condescends to accept our hospitality. I hate him! Yet I will humiliate myself for my friend's sake, and play the humble and devoted servant. I shall find strength to do so, for it is for Mohammed and his white dove. Yes, I will go with my father to the pacha's apartments."

A quarter of an hour later Tschorbadji Hassan, with a startled and sorrowful expression of countenance entered the room where Cousrouf Pacha lay reclining on his soft cushions, dreamily smoking his chibouque.

"Is it, then, really true? The whole house is filled with dismay and regret. Is it true that you intend leaving us to-morrow?"

"Perhaps," replied the pacha, composedly, rising slowly from his cushions to quiet the governor, with haughty condescension.

"So soon? Then it is indeed true? We had heard so, but we could not and would not believe it. We love you so dearly that we shall unwillingly see you depart. Even my son, my poor sick Osman, who cannot walk up a stairway because of his weakness, has requested that he may be permitted to come in person to take leave of you, and to beg that you will remember and be gracious to him in the future also. Will your excellency permit his servants to bring him in?"

Cousrouf Pacha made no reply, but arose, walked hastily to the door, opened it himself, and stepped out to Osman, who lay on the couch, beside which stood the slaves who had brought him up.

"Osman, I thank you for this proof of your friendly consideration.—Take hold now, ye dogs, and bear your master into the room!"

He walked beside the couch while the slaves bore it into the room, and deposited it, at his command, beside his own cushions.

"Now come, too, tschorbadji, and seat yourself at our side, and let us smoke the chibouque together for the last time."

"The pipe of peace, Cousrouf Pacha, as the savages do when seated together for the last time in their wigwam," said Osman, smiling.

The pacha cast a searching glance at him.

"Tschorbadji, you have a very learned son. I know nothing of such things, have never heard of them. Who smoke the pipe of peace?"

"The savages in America, when they become reconciled to their enemies, and receive them in their wigwam."

"But that has no application to us. In the first place, we are not savages, but very respectable and considerable people; and secondly, I trust I am not receiving enemies here, with whom it is necessary to smoke the pipe of peace."

"Certainly not, but very faithful friends and devoted servants, who have come to bid you a last farewell."

"You are right, tschorbadji, a last farewell, I trust," said the pacha, laughing. "For (and forgive me for saying so) it is horribly dull here in your city of Cavalla. Your revolutionary fishermen and the rest of the rabble here would make my life intolerable. I admire you, tschorbadji, for having the courage to bear it—and particularly you, my dear Osman. You should endeavor to obtain some position in Stamboul. There you would recover your health; the rude sea air here is assuredly injurious to your weak lungs."

"I wish he would do so," said the tschorbadji, with a sigh. "You are certainly right, the keen sea air and the rough storms that often surge down from the mountains are injurious to my son, but it is different in Stamboul, where one is protected from the surrounding mountains. I wish he would go to Stamboul, and that you would assist him in obtaining a suitable position there."

"Father," replied Osman, gently, "I will not separate myself from you. Wherever you are there will I remain, for we two are inseparable."

"Then a better place must be found for your father, Osman."

"If that could be, excellency, I should be happy indeed!" cried the governor.

"I am under obligations to you, tschorbadji," observed the pacha, bowing haughtily. "I am really greatly in your debt. With all my servants I have been your guest for three years, and I vainly urged you to accept payment. Indeed, I hardly dared speak of it to the wealthy and distinguished tschorbadji, and it was not fitting to attempt to remunerate him. But yet, I assure you, this weight of gratitude rests heavily on me. I have accepted your hospitality without recompense for these three long years. Now, however, tschorbadji, now that Cousrouf Pacha is about to return to Stamboul, he can at last repay this burden of gratitude and debt. You are my friend, and I now beg you to tell me of something I can do for you. Cousrouf Pacha now has power and influence which he will exert for those he loves. Therefore I entreat you, tschorbadji, acquaint me with your wishes."

"I have no other wishes than those of my son. They call me here an affectionate father, and mention me as an example of passionate paternal love, and they are right. My Osman is every thing to me ; he is my wife, child, sister, friend, comrade, my all. What Osman wishes that is my wish also. Therefore, if it so pleases you, transfer your gracious favor to my son, and grant his request, if he has one to prefer."

"I swear by my beard, by Allah, and by the prophet, if Osman expresses a wish, I will grant it certainly and surely. I repeat my triple oath, and call Allah to witness it. What he requests I will grant!"

"You have heard this oath, father, and Allah has heard it, too," said Osman, solemnly rising from his couch and turning the gaze of his large luminous eyes full on the pacha's countenance. "I have a wish, a great, a cherished wish."

"And can I grant it?"

"You can if you will."

"Certainly I will, for I am now bound by the triple oath. It is sacred to every Moslem, and sacred to me at all times. So speak, Osman, and I will grant what you request."

Osman rose from his seat, and the pale, weak youth stood there with so solemn an expression that the .tschorbadji and the pacha involuntarily arose from their cushions.

"Cousrouf Pacha, hear my wish : I require, wish, and expect of you, that you hold sacred, that is, that you neither personally, nor through any one else, insult or injure the person of my friend Mohammed Ali, the only being I love beside my father."

The pacha regarded him with a long, gloomy, threatening look, and made no reply. Osman read in his face the struggle that was raging in his soul, and continued in gentle tones:

"Cousrouf Pacha, look at me. I am a frail reed, liable to be thrown to the ground by every breath of wind. I am a poor blade of grass upon the sea-shore, liable to be swept to destruction by each wave. Oh, grant me this request, in order that, while the sun still shines for me, I may enjoy the last hours of my existence in peace!"

"Yes, do so, mighty pacha," cried the tschorbadji, bursting into tears, and falling upon his knees with folded hands. "Cousrouf Pacha, see me here at your feet, and grant my son's request in order that he may live. I know that he loves Mohammed Ali, that he loves him even more than his father. He fears that his friend is in danger through you!"

"And why do you fear this, Osman?" asked the pacha, slowly and angrily.

"I fear it," replied Osman, softly, "because I well know that Mohammed has often offended you. He is still so young and impetuous, and the consciousness of his poverty and obscure descent burdens his soul and irritates him, in the presence of your greatness and power."

"And yet he dares, in his littleness, to meet me with haughty words and to look at me as though he were my equal! Should the boy not step respectfully aside, and bow his head in humility, when he sees me? You are right, Osman, I hate this proud, obstinate lad!"

"I have uttered my only wish," said Osman, gently. "You will grant it, for I have your triple oath. I repeat my wish once more: Cousrouf Pacha, protect and spare my friend Mohammed Ali; swear that no harm shall be done him, either by you or by your servants. Let no wicked hand seek his life, neither by poison, by weapons, nor by any other means. Let him go his way in peace. By the triple oath which you have sworn, I conjure you to grant this wish."

The pacha regarded him long and gloomily, and then bowed his head slowly.

"I swore the triple oath, and Cousrouf Pacha has never yet broken his word. Your wish is accorded; the life of this lad shall be sacred to me henceforth; no hair of his head shall be injured; his life shall not be sought either by poison, by dagger, or by other means; he may go his way in peace, but woe to him if we should meet elsewhere than here, in Cavalla, where I honor my host and my oath! Be assured now and fear nothing. Mohammed Ali's life is sacred to me; I swear it!"

"I am content, and I thank you. You have made me happier than I have been for a long time. I do not deny that Mohammed has sometimes deserved to be reprimanded for his conduct, but, I also repeat, he is still so young, his heart so fiery, his soul so full of ardor and nobility. He will yet learn to conform to the customs of the world."

"I sincerely hope he may," said the pacha, quietly. "As yet he has, however, not learned it; he should come to Stamboul—there he would be taught to bend his proud neck. Tell me, Osman, have I now paid off the debt of gratitude that rested on my shoulders?"

"You have now transferred it to our shoulders," exclaimed the tschorbadji, ardently. "See how happy my Osman looks; how his countenance is wreathed in smiles! There is no trace of sorrow or pain in his features now; joy is restoring him to health; and I owe this to you, and shall continue to thank you for it, when you are no longer here. We wish you all happiness! Our friend and benefactor, the great general, Cousrouf Pacha, will in the future be called on to perform great things, and the report of his glory and power will reach us here on our peninsula,"

"I hope it may," said the pacha, softly, as he proudly inclined his head. "Yes, I hope it may. My glory will resound throughout the world, and may, perhaps, be trumpeted forth by the virgin Fame, so favorable to me, even here in this rocky nest. The imperial majesty in Stamboul has elected me to great things, and Allah will permit me to live to fulfil them."

"He will certainly do so," protested the governor.—"And now, my son, with his excellency's permission, I will call the slaves, and have you carried down again. I am afraid we are trespassing on valuable time, as his excellency will have many things to attend to."

The pacha assented to this by his silence, and the governor hastened to call the slaves, that they might bear his son down into the garden.

The pacha pressed Osman's hand once more, assured him of his friendship, and promised him solemnly that Mohammed Ali need no longer be fearful and anxious.

"And he is not," cried Osman, quickly; "he fears nothing."

"Be still, my son," exclaimed the governor, interrupting him hastily; "his excellency only means that he will be considerate with him, and that you will have nothing to fear on Mohammed's account. And now, come, let us go."

He then bowed profoundly to the pacha, and walked out beside the couch on which the slaves were carrying his son.

The pacha's countenance grew still darker when the door had closed behind father and son.

"This Osman is shrewd," he murmured to himself. "He knows how to divine one's thoughts.—Achmed and Ali, come in!"

The eunuchs glided in through the side-entrance, and remained standing near the door, their heads profoundly inclined. He slowly raised his hand, and beckoned to them to come nearer.

"What progress have you made in your search?"

The eunuchs threw themselves on the floor, profound humiliation depicted on their faces.

"Mighty and gracious master! we have been tardy slaves, and humbly acknowledge our fault; we will do all we can to redeem it, and we hope soon to bring better news. Yes, we hope, gracious master, that we shall soon be able to announce what our master desires to know."

"Then you have a trace?" said the pacha, his countenance lighting up with joy.

"Yes, master, as yet only a trace; but we hope soon to have certainty."

"Good, I will inquire no further. But of one thing I must remind you: three days have already passed, within the next four days you will have brought me the runaway slave or your heads fall."

"O gracious master, we hope to do so much sooner!"

"It is well," said the pacha, with a slight inclination of his haughty head. "And now listen further: spread the report of my departure to-morrow morning; say that Cousrouf Pacha will perhaps depart this evening, with his harem and his servants, to return no more."

"It shall be as our gracious master commands," said the two eunuchs.

"You know Mohammed Ali, the new boulouk bashi?"

"Yes, excellency, we know him."

"Let no one dare do him a bodily injury. Look down humbly when you pass him, and, if he insults you with word or look, step nevertheless respectfully aside. Let none of you dare to touch him to injure a hair of his head, or to seek his life with poison, the dagger, or any other weapon. Let the life of Mohammed Ali, the new boulouk bashi, be sacred to you all. Have you heard?"

"We have heard, mighty master."

With an impatient gesture he dismissed them, and he continued to walk to and fro in his room long after they had gone out. His brow is dark, evil thoughts fill his breast.

"I have sworn the triple oath, and I must keep it. I no longer threaten him personally. Woe to him if my suspicion proves true, and Masa has found an asylum and protection with him! I will keep my word! No hair of Mohammed's head shall be injured, but I will punish him through her; for truly, if he loves her, such punishment will be harder than any thing I could do to him personally. The eunuchs say they are on her track, and it must be so, or they would not dare to say it. And these bloodhounds, being once on the track, are sure to catch their prey!"

The eunuchs had faithfully obeyed their master's command, and hardly had an hour elapsed when all Praousta knew that Cousrouf Pacha was on the point of taking his departure from the peninsula, to return no more.

They were also informed that a ship had come to convey him back to Stamboul, where the grand-sultan was to recompense him for his long exile with power, magnificence, and honors. The matter was much discussed, and they whisperingly confessed to each other that they would be well pleased to know that the proud man, who was the cause of so much unhappiness, had taken his departure.

Was it not on his account that the double tax had been imposed on the people? Had not the extra expenditure been incurred on his account? True, the tschorbadji had attempted to deny this, but the additional expense was nevertheless clearly owing to the pacha's presence in Cavalla. Moreover, the sad story of the unhappy Masa, who had chosen to die rather than become a slave, was now known. Yes, she had taken her own life—of that, no one now entertained a doubt. She had assuredly thrown herself from the cliffs into the sea. Some boys, who were engaged at night in setting out nets, had seen a white figure alone on the Ear of Bucephalus.

That white figure was certainly Masa. She had thrown herself into the sea in order that she, the free daughter of the sheik, might not be compelled to become a slave and enter the harem of the stranger. They had sought for the body of the poor girl on the shore and among the cliffs. The sea had, however, been stormy throughout the entire day, and the surging waves must have borne her away into the depths, where she had become a welcome prey to the greedy shark. Nowhere a trace of her; she is surely dead.

The complaints and lamentations of the sheik are also silenced—he reclines motionless on his cushions. Grief and anxiety have made him helpless, and chained him to his couch. He suffers in silence, and his friends hope that death will soon release him from his misery.

And this overbearing stranger, Cousrouf Pacha, is to blame for all this!

He gave himself the appearance of graciously making the fishermen a present of the money to pay the double tax. But he had deceived them. Oh, had they but known that Masa had sold herself for this money, they never would have accepted it! They therefore hate this haughty stranger, and are glad that he is about to leave their coast forever.

The ship still lies quietly at anchor, her streamers flutter gayly in the air, her sides are hung with bright-colored carpets, and garlands of flowers are entwined with her rigging. The ship presents a brilliant spectacle, and it may well be that the pacha is to embark this very evening. But no ! Night sinks down, and all remains dark on board the ship, which casts a huge shadow across the waves. No, Cousrouf Pacha will certainly not embark this evening. The night is dark, and all is still in Praousta and on the sea-shore.

And who would care to be up and abroad at this late hour ! Whoever has a hut and a bed, remains at home and does not go out into the night. No, no one is abroad.

But is not that the sound of footsteps that now breaks in upon the stillness of the night ?

A dark shadow is gliding along among the cliffs on the shore. Who can say that it is a human being ! No star sheds its light on his path—the moon is obscured behind dark clouds. It is perhaps an eagle that has been cast down by the storm, and is now wearily winging its flight across the cliffs. Who can say that it is a man that is gliding among the cliffs ? No one sees him ; no one can betray him. The shadow now stands still for a moment, and for a single moment the moon breaks forth from behind the dark clouds. It sees the figure, it sees the man who stands there on a rock, his large, luminous eyes gazing anxiously, suspiciously about him, as though he feared betrayal.

The kindly moon has permitted him to take a look at the landscape round about him, and to assure him there is no one in the vicinity to betray him. All is at rest, he alone is awake and abroad. The moon has done enough ; it glides behind a dark cloud and conceals itself again.

The waves murmur at the feet of him who has been standing there listening, and he now glides down from the cliff to the opening in the rock. He creeps in at this opening, and on through the narrow passage to the cave, until he can stand upright. He now utters a cry, and his cry is answered in the distance. He stands still and leans against the wall of the cave, overwhelmed either with anxiety or happiness. It is with happiness, for he will find her : she has answered him.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PARADISE UNDER THE EARTH.

They rest heart to heart for a moment, and then Mohammed sinks down on his knees, and kisses the hem of her dress and her little feet, and she bows down to him and whispers in his ear words which he hardly understands, and yet each of them resounds in his soul like heavenly music.

"O these little feet! They were not created to come in contact with the earth, and to be wounded by thorns. You should tread on flowers only, and flutter from rose to rose as the butterfly from flower to flower. Alas, and yet your home is now a dark cave! Masa, it tortures me to see you here, under the earth and in darkness."

"Is it then dark here?" asked she, in her sweet voice. "I thought we had the light of the stars here! Yes, look there, I am right; look there!" She raised her arm and pointed upward to the opening in the roof of the cave through which the heavens looked down. "See, Mohammed, there are the stars, there are the heavens. Let us seat ourselves on this beautiful spot."

"You are right, Masa. There is starlight in this cave, although clouds obscure the heavens. Yes, here in our paradise we are elevated above all earthly care; here is our heaven, and you are the revelation of Allah. O Masa, let me sink down before you in adoration, kiss the hem of your garment, and entreat your forgiveness!"

"My forgiveness?" said she, nestling her little head on his breast, as they sat side by side on the cushions brought here by Mohammed's care, and covered with Persian carpets. "My forgiveness, and for what?"

"Because I thought ill of you, Masa; because, while I lay in anguish up yonder on the rock the other day, I accused you in my senseless anger, and cursed my love for you. I thought you were a woman like all other women, and yet you are beautiful and fair and pure, like a *houri* of paradise. I wished to tear you from my heart as we tear weeds from a flower-garden, and my heart was to be henceforth accessible only to ambition and glory; and now I know that all this is vain and empty. Mohammed no longer has aspirations after glory and renown; Mohammed no longer knows that wreaths of fame are twined and that laurels bloom without in the world; Mohammed only knows that this is paradise, and that heaven's fairest flower blooms here at his side. I feel your breath, my flower, I inhale fragrance from your lips, and see the starlight in your eyes, though none shines in upon us from the dark world without. I am with you, and you with me. Oh, let me rest at your side, and forget the world, and may it forget us too!"

"I do not understand your words," murmured she. "You are wise and learned, and I am only a poor girl, who has no words to express her thoughts, and hardly thoughts for that which she feels. I do know, however, that I am in paradise, and Allah forbid that my feet should bear me out into the world again! Oh, I never wish to see it again, Mohammed. And beautiful it would be, it seems to me, to slumber here in sweet tranquillity, never to awake again."

"Oh, it were heavenly, my sweet dove," murmured he, pressing her to his heart, "to fall into a sweet slumber here, and to journey hence, heavenward, to awaken in paradise. I would we had nothing more to do with the world; yet, swear to me, Masa, that when the world holds us in its embrace again, you will love me eternally—say eternally!"

"What does eternally mean?" asked she, softly. "I do not know what eternally means. All life is a single day. At sunrise this morning I felt that I loved you, and now do you suppose that Masa is so forgetful a child that she cannot preserve what she feels in her heart for a single day until the sun sets in the evening?"

"Yes, Masa, you are right!" exclaimed Mohammed, in tones of enthusiasm. "Life is as a single day. When the sun sets, night comes, and we sink down and dream, and in our dream we are conscious only of the love of the blissful day. Yes, life is but a day, and may this day end blissfully for us as it began! It is dark around us, and I cannot see you. But look, Allah is kind; he sends us his light. The moon has broken forth from behind the clouds, and it shines into our grotto and illumines your fair face. The moon and the stars love you, Masa ; yet they shall not tear you from me. No, Masa must remain with me, that my life may not end in darkness and misery, that I may be happy. O good moon, messenger of the prophet, with your brilliancy you light up the countenance of my houri. Journey on in your course, good moon, and tell the houris and the angels above that one of their sisters has remained here in the paradise grotto, and that this houri is mine ; mine—in the name of Heaven."

He pressed her to his heart and laid his head in her lap. Both were silent.

Suddenly a loud report resounded through the stillness of the night. Mohammed released himself from her arms, and sprang in terror to his feet.

"That was the report of a pistol-shot. Alas ! it awakens me from my dreams. All bliss is at an end, the earth is again here, and calls me from paradise."

"You will leave me, Mohammed !" cried she, rising from her cushion. "Mohammed, you intend to leave me to-night ?"

"O Masa, I must ! Do not tremble, my white dove ; all our troubles and anxieties will soon be at an end. That report was the signal that Cousrouf Pacha is preparing to depart."

"Is it then really true ?" asked Masa, her countenance beaming with delight. "The pacha takes his departure and restores me to freedom !"

"It is true," said Mohammed. "He was to have embarked yesterday evening, and who knows but that when the sun rises the ship will long since have sailed out of the harbor. Yet we must be cautious. It might be only a pretence, to lull us into false security. It is for this reason, Masa, that I dare not pass the night here. His spies, who follow and observe me everywhere, might announce to him that Mohammed Ali had again passed the night elsewhere than in his house. Let us be cautious while misfortune with its black pinions still hovers over us. Afterward the sun will shine for us. Consider this, Masa, and I will conduct you out into life again as soon as he shall have left the harbor. The whole earth shall then be our paradise. Let us, therefore, wait and be patient."

She stood there thoughtfully; she, too, was awakened from her dream, and life with its cares and anxieties had laid its hold on her.

"How is my father?" asked she, anxiously. "O Mohammed, I have forgotten him and his sufferings since you have been with me. You are silent. He is dead. Oh, grief for his daughter has killed my good father!"

"No, Masa! he is not dead, but he is ill. I do not deny it, grief has gnawed at his heart. Therefore, let us hope that our happiness will restore him to health. And to-morrow he will behold our happiness when I bring you to him, for you will be free, Masa, as soon as the ship has sailed."

"I shall never be free," she cried out, aloud. "He has purchased me, and I shall remain his property. O Mohammed, my soul shudders, for I am forsworn before Allah. By Allah and the spirit of my mother have I sworn that I would return and restore to him his property. I am forsworn, and therefore, Mohammed, when you leave me, the ghins come and flutter about me, pursuing me everywhere and whispering in my ear: 'You are lost and damned, for you have forsworn yourself by the spirit of your mother.' And then I fall on my knees and pray to the welis to guard and protect me in my terror and anxiety. O Mohammed, when you are here I am in paradise; but when you are away, I feel myself in hell! Therefore, remain with me. Do not leave me here in the dark night. See, the stars are all hidden, and the moon is covered with clouds. Oh, I was wrong when I said there was no night. When you are with me, the sun shines, though it be night without. But when you are not with me, it is dark night, even though the sun be shining without. Do not leave me alone, remain with your Masa, my Mohammed; stay, stay, at least to-night."

Can he resist such sweet entreaty? Can he tear himself from the fair arms that are entwined about him and draw him back, and rush out into the night? Can he speak of prudence and worldly wisdom, while she whispers such words to him in her sweet voice?

"Let come what will in the world without, let all be overwhelmed in ruin, love is here, paradise is open, and you, Masa, are its angel-occupant. Let the world pass away ; let the firm rocks be shattered ; let the sea swallow all and leave but a desert of water about us, I am content, Masa, to embark with you in a little boat, you and I alone, to ride over the waves and listen to the melodies which the naiads sing to us from the deep, and to what the voice of the wind proclaims. O my houri, alone with you in the boat, what care I for the world, for magnificence and renown ? Let others seek them, they are welcome. And though Death with his gloomy visage stood at the entrance of this grotto ready to destroy me, what care I ? And though your father die and men bury him, what care we ? We live and we love."

He pressed her passionately to his heart. But now it was she who drew him back to the world, to reality.

"No, Mohammed, my father must not die. Go to him, step to his bedside and say to him : 'Pray and wait. When the gloomy stranger who has purchased your Masa and made her his property shall have embarked in his ship and sailed, your daughter will return to you in love and happiness. Wait, father. Do not join my dear mother ; wait for your Masa.' Speak to him thus, and I know he will live to see his Masa again. No, I am not afraid. The ghins will not enter if Masa kneels at the entrance and prays to the prophet who told men that they were to love one another, and that love alone could secure happiness. No, I am not afraid. And see, Mohammed, day is breaking ; the sun will soon shine in upon me, and then Masa will sing the song taught her by Djumeila that speaks of love and stars. I am no longer afraid, Mohammed, for I am your beloved, and the girl whom a hero has chosen for his own ; how could she lack courage ?"

For the second time a loud report now resounded throughout the cave.

"I know what that means," said Mohammed, anxiously. "It is Osman warning me to be on my guard. 'I will give you a signal when danger threatens,' whispered he, in my ear, when we parted, 'that you may know that your friend is watching over you in the night also.' Yes, I must go. But listen, Masa : when I am gone, replace the stone I showed you yesterday, before the opening, and then go back into the cave to the point where the passage turns, where no one can see the entrance to the second cave. Remain there, and await the return of him you love."

"I will do so, Mohammed. When you have gone, I will push the stone before the entrance, and go back into the second cave, where I will fall on my knees and pray to Allah and his prophet until my beloved returns."

At this moment a third report resounded through the cave.

"Danger threatens—Masa, I must away. We will soon be free; farewell until then, farewell! Ah! how pale you have suddenly become! Let me look at you once more, my Masa!"

He raises her in his arms and carries her to the opening, and the moon is gracious and illumines her countenance, but it also makes it deathly pale.

"O Masa, my white dove, how pale you are! Yet your eyes are bright—let me kiss them. And with this kiss I swear I will love you eternally! And now kiss me, too, and let this kiss be the vow of your eternal love for me!"

She kissed him passionately. "I love you, Mohammed, and you alone will I love on earth!"

He looks at her tenderly, and shudders, for her countenance is still deathly pale.

"I can no longer look upon your dear face, I cannot!" he cries, in tones of anguish. "I have a dread foreboding that I see you for the last time. Farewell, Masa, farewell! Pray for me, and for yourself, and for our love. Farewell, sweet being, my white dove, farewell!"

He folds her to his heart once more, and then away, away out into the night. He still hears behind him the tones of the sweet voice crying, "Farewell, farewell!"

Then all is still, and he rushes on through the darkness toward the stairway in the rock.

BOOK III.

THE MAMELUKES.

CHAPTER I.

REVENGE.

THE night was mild and warm; the sea rested in silent majesty like a slumbering lion, and the wind seemed to hold its breath in order that his repose might not be disturbed. To be in the open air on such a night was good for the weak breast of an invalid, and Osman's father was therefore not surprised when his son expressed a desire to pass the night in the garden pavilion, in preference to remaining in the close apartments of the palace. He would be protected from wind and rain by the roof of the pavilion, and from all other sources of danger the two slaves that had been his faithful and devoted servants from his earliest youth would guard him. The two servants carried his cushions down into the garden, and Osman now lay there, wrapped in his silken coverlet; the two slaves were crouched down at his side. They were still there when the tschorbadji, before retiring for the night, came down to see his son once more and bid him good-night; and there they remained until all the lights were extinguished in the apartments of the tschorbadji as well as in those of the pacha. Then, when all had become still, one of them stooped down and addressed his master in low tones; after they had carried on a short, whispered conversation the slave arose and glided noiselessly away toward the garden-wall, which formed no obstacle to his progress—as the faithful servant could climb like a cat—and he was soon on the other side.

Osman remained on his couch, conversing in low tones with the other servant. Both were attentively observing the pacha's harem, and it surprised them to see that lights were being carried to and fro in the lower apartments at so late an hour.

"Something extraordinary is surely taking place there," murmured Osman, "and we must be on our guard, and listen to the slightest noise."

Hours passed, and the same activity was still being displayed in the harem; and from time to time the attentive servant perceived shadows flitting up and down the avenue that led to the harem.

Foosteps are now heard approaching. It is the slave Nadeg, and he comes swiftly to his master's couch, kneels down and speaks to him for some time in low, earnest tones. Osman rises from his cushions.

"The time has come, we must warn him, we must help him! Be quick, both of you!—Jabad, hasten to the summit of the rock. Here, take the pistol and give the signal agreed upon, three shots fired at short intervals.—But you, Nadeg, hasten down to the mouth of the cave again, and when, aroused by my shots, my friend comes out, call him, tell him I am awaiting him, and bring him to me at once. Oh, I am anxious on his account: be quick, that you may get there in time!"

The two walk stealthily and rapidly down the garden-path. Osman listens to their retreating footsteps, and, as they die away in the distance, he draws a breath of relief. They are good, zealous servants, and will obey his instructions faithfully. He listens again eagerly, and again looks over toward the harem, where he sees the lights still flitting about and shadows passing the windows.

Osman's heart tells him that something unusual, something that bodes no good to his friend, is going on there, and his love gives strength to his poor, weak body. He rises from his cushions; his limbs are stiff, and his breast pains him, but he is heedless of this. Cautiously he descends the steps into the garden, and walks noiselessly down the pathway. He knows that a high hedge separates the garden of the harem from the rest of the park at the end of this path. Hitherto all have respected this boundary, and no one has dared to cross it; may the good spirits pardon the young man for venturing to do so now! He is in the garden of the harem. It is certainly dangerous to enter it, and, if the eunuchs should discover him there, they would seize him. But, fortunately, he is the tschorbadji's son, and that will protect him. He is on his father's property. He walks onward, no longer painfully; he no longer feels that his breast hurts him; he is only thinking of his friend; he can perhaps discover something for him, perhaps do something for him. He now stands still and listens. In the distance he hears the reports of the pistol.

"Ah, Mohammed is warned! He has been aroused from his sweet repose, and will come to me."

But he must know what all this disturbance and running about means. Osman has approached close to the harem, and stands at the iron gate that opens into the court-yard. He stands there for a moment and listens, and then crosses the court-yard and looks toward the door in the wall that opens into the street. All is still in the house, as in the yard; but now he hears a noise at the door that opens into the vestibule of the building. It is opened, and two dark figures appear, and descend the steps into the yard. They are carrying something; it looks like a cot; it is a cot covered with white sheets, but it is empty. They carry it across the yard, and out into the street.

He hears them lock the door from the outside; hears the murmuring of voices, and then all is again quiet. What was the cot intended for? What could it all mean?

He listens, and looks around anxiously; but all is still. Perhaps his care and anxiety have been groundless; perhaps these are only things the servants are carrying to the ship to prepare for Cousrouf's departure on the morrow.

He again listens awhile, and then returns through the garden to the pavilion. Wearily he throws himself on his cushions, and lies there, for a moment, with closed eyes.

Now he hears footsteps approaching. Who can it be? he asks in a low voice, and the two servants emerge from the darkness, come to his side, and whisper something in his ear. Osman draws a breath of relief.

"Allah be praised, he is coming, he is saved!"

Yes, other footsteps are now rapidly approaching, and, in a moment, Mohammed is at his friend's side.

"You called me, my friend, and here I am! What has happened?"

"I do not know, Mohammed. It seems to be nothing, and yet my heart was filled with care and anxiety on your account, and I could not resist the inclination to call you. Listen: Nadeg was among the cliffs not far from the entrance of your cave, to which you came late at night. He was standing guard there, but he was not alone."

"He was not alone? What does that mean?" asked Mohammed, in dismay.

"Not alone; for in the vicinity, hidden in the shadow of a rock, stood two dark figures, and he heard them whispering and telling each other that you were there, and that they were now sure of their prey. When Nadeg had heard this, he returned hastily to me, and told me of it. I then sent both servants out, the one to stand guard near the cave, the other to the summit of the rock to fire the pistol, and give the warning signal. Nadeg found the two men still near the cave, lying in wait like panthers, and he saw that they were gradually creeping nearer and nearer to the cave. In the meanwhile, I had gone into the harem-garden, where I saw two eunuchs carry a cot out into the street. Now you know all, and now it seems to me that all is well. I was anxious on your account, fearing these men, who were lying in wait, might attack and kill you. This was why I sent my servants out. But now I am happy, for you are safe, and with me. I beg you to stay with me until to-morrow; stay here, that every one may know where you have passed the night. Do not refuse me. This is the last night of danger and anxiety. Cousrouf departs to-morrow, and then you will be safe."

"No, Osman, no, it is impossible!" said Mohammed, who could not himself account for the anxiety that made his heart throb so wildly. "I thank you for your warning, and beg you to let me have your pistol. Is it loaded?"

"Yes," said Nadeg. "I loaded it again after firing."

"Yes, give it to him!—If you will not remain, Mohammed, take the weapon, and, if I hear a shot, I shall know you are attacked and in danger ; then I will wake my father, and beg him to send the soldiers to your assistance. But stay with me yet awhile, my friend ! "

" No, Osman, I can remain no longer. I must be off ! My heart is filled with a sense of impending evil, with gloomy forebodings."

"Then go, Mohammed, and may Allah bless and protect you ! Oh, that this fearful night were at an end ! "

Mohammed hastens away down the garden path, and soon disappears in the darkness.

"Stay with me, you good, faithful servants. Oh, how anxious I am, how wildly my heart beats ! Yet I do not fear for myself, but for my dear friend Mohammed. Pray to Allah for grace and mercy ! Yes, let us all pray to Allah ! "

Mohammed rushes on through the night, down the stone stairway. He flies with the speed of an arrow from rock to rock. Now he is down by the cave. He looks behind him once more. There is nothing to be seen, nowhere a human figure. Nothing ! Osman must have been mistaken ; no one observed him, no one was there ! He creeps through the fissure in the cliff, to the inner grotto to the place where the passage becomes narrow, and where Masa was to have rolled the stone before the opening. He feels for this stone to push it back. But what does this mean ? The stone is no longer there, the cave is open !

He recoils for a moment with terror. He then resolutely creeps on through the opening. Masa must have forgotten it, that is all ! He calls her—no answer.

But he had told her to retire into the second grotto, and await him there. There she will be, there she must be.

" Masa, where are you ? Masa, my white dove, Masa ! "

All is still ; no answer comes, no voice replies in tender greeting to his anxious and repeated call.

" Masa ! where are you, Masa ? "

The silence is profound. He utters a cry that resounds fearfully through the cave. He gropes about in the darkness. Then he turns again, and cries out loudly, but all is still as before. He goes back to the passage, and into the first grotto, the one with the large opening in the roof, to the place where the sky can be seen. The clouds have disappeared, and the moon sheds its soft light into the cave.

"Masa, are you asleep?" he cries, as he kneels down beside the cushions.

But they are empty, and things are thrown about in disorder in the grotto. The moonlight shines brightly in the cave, and shows that a terrible struggle has taken place here. The carpets and cushions are thrown together confusedly; fragments of broken cups and saucers strew the ground, and every thing is overturned. At last he must recognize the fact. Masa is gone, he has been robbed of his Masa.

He sinks down upon the earth and cries in loud, heart-rending tones: "Masa is gone; the slave-dealer has recovered his slave. Oh, horror, Masa is gone!" He springs to his feet, and rushes toward the entrance; then he stands still again, and cries in piercing tones that make the rocks reverberate: "Masa, where are you?" No answer. It was thus that her father had cried out a few days before: "Masa, where are you?"

Punishment has overtaken the undutiful daughter, and him who had harbored her.

"Masa, where are you?" For the second time, the agonized voice of love resounded through the cave. Masa is gone.

Ah, where can she be? All is still. A struggle has taken place here. Hired assassins, perhaps robbers, have broken into this paradise here beneath the earth that he considered so secure. But nothing is secure from man; cruel men have broken into his sanctuary and desecrated his paradise.

He no longer groans and laments. He raises his clinched fists, and swears by Allah that he will be revenged on the robbers and murderers of his Masa. Suddenly he is seized from behind, two arms encircle him like iron rings, and bind his arms to his side. Another hand seizes the pistol he carries in his girdle, and draws his sword from his scabbard. Mohammed opens his lips to cry out, but a hand is laid on them, and he is incapable of uttering a single tone.

"It would be vain to cry out, Mohammed Ali, young boulouk bashi. No one can hear you but we, and we are indifferent to your cries.—Be quick, Aga, put the gag in his mouth and bind the cloth over it. Let us finish our work! Day is breaking, and it must be done quickly! Our master's orders were to do it quickly."

Mohammed is securely bound and motionless. He is now a mere package borne along by the eunuchs, but a package that thinks, feels, and suffers. His eyes are wide open, and stare up at his enemies with a fearful expression. He knows he cannot pierce them through with his eyes, for they are not daggers, and his hands are bound. But he swears that he will have vengeance on his enemies, either above, before Allah's throne, or here on earth already, if he is permitted to live. He has no fear for himself, for his own life. For that he cares not. He cares only for Masa, he thinks only of her, and his roving glance seeks her anxiously.

He is being borne to the sea-shore. Do they intend to cast him into the waves? Let it be so. Death is sweet, divine, when one has lost all on earth. And he feels that all, that his Masa, is lost.

If she is lost to him, what further need of the stars in heaven, of the moonlight, of the bright sunshine? Then all is darkness and desolation. Will they kill him? Will they cast him into the sea?

The waves will murmuringly receive him, and consign him to their depths. There he will rest tranquilly. They have now reached the beach, and the eunuchs lay him down on the sand; not carelessly as a package is thrown down, but cautiously and gently.

"Remember, Aga," murmured one to the other, "that we have orders not to injure a hair of his head, or to cause him the slightest pain. We will lay him down here, here he can rest easily, and can raise his head and see. The eyes of the young boulouk bashi, accustomed as they are to the dark, will easily be able to detect who it is that approaches from over there." And the eunuch raised his hand and pointed toward the path that led to Cavalla.

Yes, his eyes are accustomed to the dark, and he does see figures advancing from that direction. Not one or two, but a crowd of figures are approaching, and in their midst he sees something white, that is being borne along by others.

For a moment his heart stands still with horror, and then beats again with redoubled violence.

The procession comes nearer and nearer. Now he hears a low, wailing voice. It is she, he recognizes Masa's voice. And alas! he can utter no tone, he cannot rise and fly to her assistance. His mouth is gagged, his hands and feet are securely bound. There he lies perfectly helpless; he can do nothing but swear vengeance to himself. Oh, he cannot utter a single word to tell that he is there, and that he shares her grief and anguish.

They have now come close to him. Mohammed sees them deposit a cot on the ground. He sees a white veiled figure lying motionless on this cot. He also sees and recognizes the haughty man who now comes to the side of the cot. It is Cousrouf Pacha, his hated and now dreaded enemy. Alas! he is now in his power. The young lion lies bound at the panther's feet; he is helpless and must submit to all.

Cousrouf commands the eunuchs, who had stood still awaiting his orders, to retire after first placing the cot a little nearer to the sea.

They noiselessly do as directed, and then retire. Now they are alone—Cousrouf Pacha and the two bound, helpless creatures.

A few rosy little clouds have appeared in the east, it is growing lighter, and the dark mantle of night is being lifted. The sea is beginning to swell with the breath of morning, and to caress the beach, and murmur at the feet of the fettered man. He looks neither at the sea beneath, nor at the heavens above. He gazes up with flaming eyes at him who stands composedly by his side, looking down upon him contemptuously.

"Mohammed, you have a friend who loves you well, and this friend was too shrewd for me. I had sworn with the triple oath that I would grant the request he should ask of me. He asked for your life and your safety."

A low groan escaped the breast of the bound man. Though he could not denounce his enemy in words, he could nevertheless give expression to the curse that burned in his heart in the proud, fierce glance of his eye. But he must bear his enemy's scornful words and smiles in silence.

"I gave my word that you should suffer no bodily injury, and I will keep it. But you shall see how Cousrouf Pacha punishes where no oath binds him, and how he avenges himself on those who dare to defy him and his authority. Yes, you shall see, and shall carry with you throughout life the remembrance of what you have seen. Thus Cousrouf avenges himself on you. Now look and hear. Incline your head a little, and look down at that cot on which the white figure lies."

Oh, why is the sun so cruel as to begin to shed its light around them, and illumine this figure, that the poor bound man may see it distinctly!

It is she, it is Masa! So near and yet so far, so widely, eternally separated from him. No longer can they grasp hands or exchange vows of undying love. A grave lies between, a fearful, impassable barrier. That they both know. For they know the law—the law of the land that permits the master to punish the slave he has purchased. Yes, to punish her according to the law if he finds her unfaithful. She is tied up in a sack and cast into the sea, that no mound may designate the spot where a poor traitoress has found her place of burial; that she may disappear from the world untalked of and unnoticed.

Cousrouf stands haughtily erect beside the cot on which the white figure lies.

"Masa, daughter of the Sheik of Praousta, confess that you are rightfully and according to the law my slave. I paid you the purchase-money, and you accepted it. I was gracious, and granted your request that you might pass the day with your father. I was a fool, and trusted to human faith. Because you swore by the spirit of your mother and by Allah, and all you held sacred, that you would return to me in the evening, as it beseemed a purchased slave, to my harem, where the eunuchs awaited you. I granted you this delay out of kindness. You mocked at my mercy and scorned my kindness. You broke your oath. And you fled from your master with this boy in shameless infidelity."

He paused and looked down at the white figure, as if expecting an answer, although he knew that Masa, too, had been gagged in order that no cry for help might escape her pale lips. They are both bound. The same fate has overtaken both, and they must bear it in silence. Their fearful anguish can find no utterance.

"Masa, I repeat what I said before. Repent and attempt to repair the wrong you have done; show your master that you will belong to him in love; show this, as he requires it of you. Go with me voluntarily to the sheik, your father, to-morrow, and say to him: 'Cousrouf Pacha has purchased me, and I will follow him out into the world, of my own free will and love.' Say this to the boy, too, who lies there; tell him that henceforth you will be your master's faithful slave, and will serve him in love and joyousness. Do this, Masa, and I will pardon you for the sake of your youth and beauty, and because my heart prompts me to do so. Raise your hand three times in token of your assent, and, I repeat, I will forgive you. Yet your repentance must be public. I demand this in justice to myself, and on account of that proud boy, that he may receive his punishment through you. Now, answer! Give the sign!"

He pauses and waits. Nothing breaks in upon the stillness but the murmuring of the waves upon the shore.

The two unhappy creatures cannot pour out their anguish in each other's ears, or exchange their vows of undying love. And yet for a moment they are blessed, for their hearts understand each other, and their souls are filled for an instant with ineffable love and happiness and anguish.

Mohammed knows that Masa refuses what the haughty man requires of her. Mohammed knows that Masa prefers death to life at the side of another man, and he feels some consolation in his heart at the thought that she is there, and that her death is but the manifestation of the immortality of her love.

He is the witness of her death and of her fidelity, and this soothes his anguish. Ah! it is sweet to die under the glance of love, heavenly and blissful to sink into the grave with gaze fixed on the countenance of the beloved one, heart communing with heart, though lips can find no utterance. It is a grand and elevating sight to him who loves to behold so faithful and heroic a death. After long years have elapsed, Mohammed will still think of this hour when Masa stood firm and immovable in her vows, nobly and disdainfully rejecting life.

Blessed be the love that is strong even unto death! Blessed be death when such a spirit hovers over and consecrates it.

A long pause. And Cousrouf Pacha speaks again in harder and more imperious tones than before:

"Raise your hand, Masa, and give the sign I require."

Masa remains motionless. Death awaits her; she knows this, and is glad. Oh, that her face were not veiled! Mohammed might then read her love in her eyes—in these stars fallen from heaven, as he had called them a few short hours before.

"Masa, give the sign; this is your last opportunity."

She does not move.

"Then I curse you, and you die! You have pronounced judgment on yourself!—Here, ye slaves!"

They flutter to his side like the ravens of the night, greedily seeking their prey.

"Take hold of her and tie her up in the sack."

Mohammed's hands and feet are bound, and he cannot rise, but he can lift his head and gaze at the dread deed that is being done, and he does so. Yes, he sees his white dove disappear in the sack in the black grave that is closed over her.

"Thus are unfaithful slaves punished; and thus the law allows and commands. Tie the mouth of the sack securely. Is it done? Is the boat ready?"

They murmur that all is in readiness.

"Good! Row her out on the water. Yet not too far, in order that this boy may see what takes place."

He must bear it, and look on while the black ravens drag his white dove down to the shore, and cast the living burden into the boat.

They row with rapid strokes from the shore, but not far out, for they know the sea is deep at this place, and that it greedily swallows all that is confided to it. To the rope with which the mouth of the sack is tied up they have secured two heavy iron balls, that it may sink rapidly into the deep. They stop.

"Take in the oars! Now lift the sack; cast it into the sea!"

The waves receive their prey, and the water foams and eddies for a moment over the place where it went down. All is still again. The boat is turned and rowed back to the shore.

Cousrouf Pacha has stood there, composedly gazing at this fearful, horrible burial. Now he steps to the side of the poor, bound man, and takes leave of him in cruel, mocking words.

Does he hear them? His widely-opened eyes stare out fixedly upon the waters. He is motionless, no quivering muscle indicates that he has understood the pacha's words of triumph and mockery. Cousrouf turns and beckons to the slaves.

"Leave him lying there! He will be found in the morning, for he will be looked for. Nothing has been done to him, and I have kept my word. Now let us go; the ship is ready to sail, is it not?"

"Yes, gracious master, all is in readiness," replied the eunuchs.

He turns and walks off toward Cavalla. An hour later, Cousrouf Pacha leaves the governor's house, and leaves it to return no more.

His harem had been conveyed to the ship before the morning dawned; and all his treasure and baggage had been packed, and taken on board the day before. All is in readiness to weigh the anchor and sail as soon as the pacha shall have come on board.

Cousrouf Pacha walks proudly down toward the harbor, at his side the governor, who insists on accompanying his honored guest to the shore. The servants in gold-embroidered liveries, and the slaves, follow his excellency.

And, gayly smiling, Cousrouf chats with the governor all the way down to the shore, grasps his hand in parting, and thanks him for his hospitality. He then enters the boat covered with costly carpets that is to convey him to the ship.

The tschorbadji stands on the shore gazing after him, vainly endeavoring to display a sorrowful countenance, and repress all evidence of gladness that fills his heart at the thought that, after long years, the haughty pacha, who entered his house as master, has at last departed. Ah, it will be delightful to be able to walk in the park and garden, with his Osman, without the fear of meeting his proud guest.

Hastily the tschorbadji returns to Cavalla, to his son who is still reclining in the garden house, and relates that Cousrouf has departed, and that he has sent his dear Osman the kindest greetings, and the best wishes for his welfare.

Osman listens with an air of indifference and anxiety, and his father regards him with dismay.

"Osman, what is the matter, what is it that grieves you?"

"Father, I must say it. Something fearful has taken place this night!"

"What can have happened, Osman? Tranquillize yourself! You are trembling! What has occurred?"

"Father, I do not know as yet; I have been listening for the shot Mohammed was to fire. I have not yet heard it, and yet I feel that some misfortune has happened to him, and that something dreadful has taken place."

"But what can have happened to Mohammed?"

"I cannot speak of it now, and I am a poor, unhappy being, whose feet are too weak to bear him. I pray you go down to Praousta yourself. Oh, go to the cliffs, father, go to the caves and openings in the rock! Take the servants with you! I conjure you, father, do not delay a moment!"

He could speak no further, and the tschorbadji saw, with dismay, that his son's face was deathly pale.

"Be courageous, my Osman! It shall be as you say. I will call the servants. See, I am already going!"

He hastily left the palace with his servants. All is still quiet in Praousta—the walk among the cliffs, and down to the shore. Then suddenly—

"What is that on the beach? O Allah, the merciful! Is that not a dead body? Is it not Mohammed? Bound and gagged! He does not move! Quick, cut the ropes, take the gag out of his mouth!"

This is speedily done, but still Mohammed does not move.

"Is he dead? There are no wounds to be seen on his person! No, not dead, he is only insensible. Bring water, wet his temples, cool his forehead!"

Allah be praised! He moves, he lives! Yes, he lives, and he bounds suddenly to his feet, and he gazes around with the expression not of a man, but of a tiger. He then utters a cry so fearful, so terrible a cry, that the tschorbadji's heart is filled with anxiety and compassion.

With outstretched arms, Mohammed walks down to the verge of the sea.

The servants rush after him, and endeavor to hold him back. He clinches his fists and strikes them, but they grasp him firmly, and at last succeed in overcoming him.

"Mohammed, compose yourself and be strong!" said the tschorbadji, clasping his arms about him. "Friend of my son, take pity on me, and remember that Osman dies if you die."

He shakes his head, but cannot speak. He looks at the sea, the terrible sea! His eyes stare in horror at the place where Masa sank, then close, and he falls to the ground insensible. The servants now raise him in their arms, and carry him to the governor's house.

His countenance deathly pale, Osman stands at the gate awaiting them. He sees the sad procession approaching. He knows they are bringing his friend, and, hastening forward to meet them, he receives the motionless body, hot, glowing tears pouring from his eyes.

Awakened by the dew of his friend's falling tears, Mohammed opens his eyes and looks up. His lips part, and murmur softly, "Dead, Masa is dead!"—nothing more!

The whole history of his anguish lies in the words, "Dead, Masa is dead!"

CHAPTER II.

ALL THINGS PASS AWAY.

TEN years had passed since the painful event that had consigned the daughter of the sheik, the Flower of Praousta, to so early a grave, and caused him who had loved her a long and severe illness.

Ten years! To the happy, when he looks back at them, they are but a few days of sunshine, the contemplation of which delights him, and the memory of which softens his heart. To the unhappy they are as a cold, desolate eternity of torment, and he looks back with reluctance at them, and the misery he has endured, measuring the days of anguish that are still to come.

Ten years! In Cavalla they had changed nothing. They had only left their handwriting on the faces of those who had been living ten years before, and had witnessed those painful events. The faces of men had changed, but the sea then, as at that time, shone in the beauty and freshness of eternal youth, and still surged in majesty along its rock-bound coast, and over the deep, the unknown grave of the beautiful Masa, the forgotten one.

Yes, the forgotten one!

All things pass away; grief as well as joy is forgotten. The years roll on over both, like the waves of the deep over the bodies consigned to its keeping.

All things pass away! Man has only to learn and to wait in patience. No matter how pain may rend his soul, if he only knows how to wait in patience, the balm of time will gradually heal his wounds and soothe his soul. All things pass away!

To be sure there are hopeless and weak natures who refuse to wait for this soothing balm of time; natures which destroy themselves in fiery torture, or in their cowardly weakness are destroyed by the dark genius of despair.

The poor sheik had not been able to bear the loss of his only child, his Masa. He had died of grief. He had called for his Masa with his last breath.

No one now speaks of her. The young girls of that time have now become mothers, and sometimes tell their little ones of the Flower of Praousta and her death, as of a fairy tale of the olden time.

It has become a fairy-tale, and has been written in verses which the fisher-boys sing when they go out upon the waves. They have almost forgotten that only ten years have passed since Masa's death; and when they gaze at the pale, earnest face of Mohammed Ali as he passes through the streets of Cavalla in his business occupations, they scarcely remember that he it is who was the cause of her death.

Does he remember it himself?

All things pass away, grief and joy alike. He has suffered much since those days, but he has suffered in silence; few know that he loved Masa, and these few have considerately refrained from touching the wound that had once bled in his heart, lest it might not yet be healed.

When found on the sea-shore that morning by the father of his friend Osman, Mohammed Ali was taken up to the governor's house, where he was tenderly cared for.

For many days he remained entirely unconscious of all that was going on around him. He lay there coffined in his grief, as in living death. They cooled his feverish brow, and poured strengthening cordials between his lips. The magicians and sorcerers, as well as the physicians of Cavalla and the neighboring cities, were summoned to his assistance by the tschorbadji and his son. But neither amulets nor talismans, neither medicines nor herbs, could heal the wounds which did not bleed, or cool the burning pain of his soul.

He lay there motionless, his eyes gazing fixedly at vacancy, and yet they constantly saw the one fearful yet blissful picture, the Flower of Praousta, the white dove, as she lay there in the early dawn, her large eyes fixed on him tenderly; and saw, too, the fearful, the never-to-be-forgotten event. As the dark body sank beneath the waves, a shudder would course through his whole being, and a scarcely-audible cry escape his lips. The ear of his listening friend Osman would catch the word that escaped him, and this word was "Revenge! revenge!"

With time all things pass away. There is a limit to the profoundest pain, to the profoundest torpor. One day Mohammed raised his hand and in a low voice called for water.

Consciousness had returned. He now felt the torment that glowed in his soul. When a man has become conscious of his suffering, there is a possibility of relief.

The water at least cooled his lips ; and the tender, affectionate words of his friend, and the tears of sympathy that fell upon his countenance, at last cooled the fire that burned in his soul.

Happy is he who can impart his grief to others, whom Fate does not compel to confine it within his own bosom, and let it gnaw at his vitals. Happy is he who can pour out the burden of his sorrow and suffering in the ear of a friend! That grief of which one can speak is not mortal.

But there is another kind of grief and suffering more bitter than that—it is deep, like the grave. Black like the night is the grief that can find no utterance, that is chained to the heart by a sense of duty.

Are such the grief and suffering that burden the breast of the pale man who stands there on the shore gazing out at the sea? Are such the grief and suffering that sometimes break in upon the solitude and stillness of the night in low sobs from the lips of the man who, but ten years ago, was so full of the courage, energy, and joyousness of youth?

Osman had not nursed his friend alone. A woman had stood at his side ; the beautiful Ada, of whom Osman sometimes whispered to his friend that she loved him.

Upon hearing of his grief and illness, Ada, conscious of her love only, and casting aside all the fetters that bound her, had left her husband's house and came to the palace of her uncle, with whom she was a great favorite. With glowing words she told him that she would never return to the house of her husband, who had long tormented her with his fierce jealousy, because he well knew that his wife did not love him, but loved the friend of his relative, young Mohammed Ali. In the strength and ardor of her love, she had not cared to deny that this was so, and firmly declared that she would be his alone; and therefore had she come up to the palace to nurse and wait on him she loved, in his illness and distress.

The tschorbadji did not oppose her wishes, and the poor, delicate youth Osman was well pleased to have Ada's assistance in nursing his friend.

She had been at his bedside constantly, and listened eagerly to the words that fell from his lips in the delirium of his fever. Ada would lie on her knees beside him, absorbed in those mysterious outpourings of the human heart; listening to his descriptions of the object of his great love, of his Masa, of her fate, and hear his oaths of vengeance.

After the days of fever, and of the outpourings of anguish, came the days of exhaustion and of returning consciousness. The struggle between life and death lasted long, but life was at last victorious.

Mohammed now felt his weakness, and he lay, as in the beginning of his illness, for many a day, motionless, on his bed, with widely-opened eyes, staring around him.

But he now saw, and was conscious of what he saw.

He saw his friend Osman, who followed his every movement with tender glances, and whose countenance shone with delight when Mohammed smiled on him, and told him with a look that he recognized him, and knew of his love. He saw, too, the veiled woman, who flitted about him, reading his every wish in his face, and fulfilling it before he expressed it. It touched his heart to perceive that there was still a woman who cared for him, and was anxious on his account. He had believed himself alone in the wide world, and there were now beside him two beings that shared his sorrow, and whose hearts beat warmly for him. This was written in their countenances; this their busy, anxious movements betrayed.

When he was sufficiently recovered to be spoken to, Osman told him of Ada's love, of her grief on his account, of her joy in being permitted to nurse him, and of her having separated herself from the past, forsaking all else to serve him and him alone.

He made no reply, but closed his eyes, and a low groan escaped his lips.

Poor Ada! The story of her love reminds him of his own, and for a moment the old wound bleeds afresh.

Could he be ungrateful? Could he now abandon her who had forsaken every thing for him when he was in distress, and needed her care? Could he do this now, when strength had returned to him, now that he was able to walk in the garden, supported on his friend Osman's arm? Could he forsake her who walked beside him, her eyes sparkling with delight at his recovery?

And when the tschorbadji came, now that Mohammed was strong enough to occupy himself with his future business matters, and spoke to him seriously, and, with Ada's consent, formally proposed his marriage with his niece, in order that her reputation might not suffer, and that she might regain the position she had lost before the world on his account, could he cowardly decline, and excuse himself with his own grief? Would it become him to say, "Let the woman who has loved me live in disgrace!" Could he do this?

No, he felt that it would be cruel in him to act thus; and how could he be cruel, he who had suffered so much from the inhumanity of others?

He accepted the tschorbadji's proposal. He went to Ada, who awaited him, her heart throbbing anxiously, and asked her if she would be his wife, follow him to his house, and walk with him through life in sorrow and in joy.

He asked this question in a sad, low voice, and Ada knew what lay buried in the depths of his heart; but she, nevertheless, accepted his offer, and consoled herself with the thought: "All things pass away, and time heals all wounds."

She became his wife, and brought with her a rich dowry.

He had, however, made no inquiries after this; did not care for it; and did not rejoice when, on the morning after the wedding, the tschorbadji took his arm and conducted him to one of the largest and best houses in the main street of Cavalla. He showed him the store and parlors, and led him up the stone stairway into the apartments of the harem, that were richly furnished and adorned.

Nor did he smile when, on descending the stairway, Ada met him, and begged him, in her gentle voice, to accept the house and all it contained as his property, as a love-offering from her.

He thanked her with many kind and tender words, yet Ada felt that the wound still burned in his soul, and the sad tone of his voice did not escape her. The house was handsome, and so was the store. The advice of the merchant Lion had been taken by Ada, and the tschorbadji and he kindly assisted in arranging every thing for the young merchant in a suitable and appropriate manner. Mohammed was not to deal, like his friend Lion, in all kinds of household articles. Lion knew the young man better; he knew that such a business would not suit him, and that his lips would not conform to the necessity of using complacent words and flattery, in order to dispose of his wares. The merchant had, therefore, advised Ada and the tschorbadji to arrange to have the young man embark in a wholesale business.

The tobacco of Macedonia is celebrated far and wide, and vessels come there from all quarters of the globe to export this article and distribute it throughout the world. They had, therefore, made Mohammed proprietor of a large tobacco warehouse, and he had now been engaged in this business some ten years, and had become a wealthy merchant. The people called him a happy man, too, and perhaps he was, for Mohammed seemed to have true domestic happiness in his wife and children; he conducted no second wife into his harem. Ada was his only wife, and the sole mistress of his house.

Yes, he was certainly happy in his family; three sons had been born to him, and he often went out upon the sea with them, and taught them, in their boats, to command the waves; he also taught them to handle the gun, and other manly accomplishments. But he never took the boys to that part of the shore where the entrance to the cave lay; and the foot of man has never entered it again! The fissure in the rocks has disappeared, covered with stones.

No one saw Mohammed go to this spot on the evening before his marriage with Ada. No one saw him, as with the strength of a giant he rolled huge stones to the opening, and piled them up before the grotto. Nor did any one see him, before he had done this, enter the grotto with bowed head and folded arms, as though approaching the holy mosque. Nor did the ear of man hear the groans and lamentations that escaped his breast as he lay thereon; the spot upon which the light of the moon and stars of heaven shone down through the opening above. There he lay, one entire night, and a whole world of suffering lay on his soul throughout that night. He wished, during those fearful hours, to rend from his heart the remembrance of all the anguish and all the bliss associated with that place in the past. Did he succeed? Who knows, who can tell?

All things pass away, and time heals all wounds.

Mohammed is a wealthy merchant, the husband of a charming, lovely woman, and the father of three strong, handsome boys, who look out boldly and defiantly into the world with their dark eyes, the picture of their father in earlier days.

How would Sitta Khadra rejoice could she see these boys!

Would she also rejoice if she could see her son gravely and silently attending to his duties, speaking with the men who come to see him, of tobacco, of good harvests, of future prospects, and of the success already achieved in his business?

Of other matters Mohammed never speaks, not even to his friend Lion, who often comes to see him. When Mohammed needs advice at times in his affairs, he seeks it of him; he listens smilingly when Lion tells him of what is going on in the world; and, without letting Mohammed perceive it, attentively observes him, endeavoring to read, in his grave, tranquil countenance, whether new feelings are awakening in his soul, whether the young merchant has really buried the former ambition of the youth.

But he detects nothing in that tranquil face; ambition sleeps, the love of glory is dead within him. This is Lion's opinion, and the opinion of all. But it is not the opinion of Osman, who understands him best. He has sometimes seen Mohammed's face lighten when the conversation was of the struggles going on in Egypt, or when the Turkish fleet was spoken of that had gone over to chastise the rebellious Mameluke beys! He had seen a deathly pallor overspread Mohammed's face when on a recent occasion a merchant, who came from Stamboul, reported that the grand-vizier had sent a great pacha to Egypt, one who had been banished, the now so mighty Cousrouf Pacha, the favorite of the grand-admiral. Yes, Osman had observed his change of countenance at the mention of this name, and that he secretly clinched his fists and grasped the hilt of his dagger; and he alone knew that, though Mohammed's wrath found no utterance, it still lived within him.

Mohammed had suddenly turned away on this occasion, on some suddenly-conceived pretext, and had not been seen again that day.

He had gone alone to the summit of the rock, and Osman alone knew that the dark speck which he saw on the crest of Bucephalus was the figure of his friend, who had sought this solitude for the purpose, perhaps, of easing his heart of its anguish and to enjoy the holy festival of remembrance, up there alone with God and Nature!

CHAPTER III.

THE BIM BASHI.

MOHAMMED'S countenance was graver and paler than usual when he came down from Bucephalus. But it seemed that his heart had there received milder and softer impressions. He spoke to his wife in more gentle and cordial tones; and instead of repairing, as was his custom, to a coffee-house, where merchants assembled and exchanged their views and opinions, smoked the chibouque together, and discussed the news received from foreign countries, he remained at home in the family circle. At his request, Osman had come to pass the evening with them, for Mohammed well knew that this was the young man's only happiness. These ten years did not benefit Osman's health; he was still the withered stalk that bows its head, but is not torn down by the wind, but only swayed to and fro by it at its pleasure.

Yes, Osman was weak, and firm and constant in one thing only, in his love for his friend.

With him this feeling took the place of all else; Mohammed was to Osman what the latter was to his father—his only joy in life! And for these two Osman sustained himself, bore his ill health and suffering, and let the sunlight shine upon, and the storms of life sweep over him.

Osman understood why Mohammed was so kind and genial to-day. He knew that the day had its significance, and that the wound bled within secretly and incessantly. In silence Mohammed is praying for forgiveness, for having on this day permitted his thoughts to wander back to the past, for having sunk down in sadness upon the spot on the brow of the rock that had once witnessed his happiness; and he desires to be mild and gentle to his family this evening. His wife Ada is thankful and very happy. Mohammed so rarely laughs and jests with her, so rarely plays with the boys! To be sure he has never grieved her, has always been kind and gentle, and has never opposed her wishes. But yet she knows she has no share in his inmost heart. He talks with her of the daily affairs of life, he allows her to participate in all such matters, but he never speaks to her of his heart's inmost thoughts, and whether he suffers and longs to leave these desolate cliffs, or whether he is discontented with the monotonous, matter-of-fact life he is leading—she knows not! Mohammed has never complained to her, neither has he to his friend. But the latter has read his friend's heart, and understands it better than Mohammed himself. And a day was soon to come which proved this.

A message came from Stamboul. A large ship arrived at Cavalla, and her sailors related that a number of ships still larger and handsomer had arrived in the Bay of Sta. Marmara. The ship put out a boat, which came to the shore and landed a richly-attired officer who went up to Cavalla. He repaired to the palace and delivered a letter, secured with magnificent seals, to the tschorbadji. The letter was from Cousrouf Pacha to his host of former years. He had not been heard from since that time, and the tschorbadji had supposed himself long since forgotten. He was familiar with the ways of the great, whose lips are ever ready to utter promises, which are forgotten the next hour. Ten years have elapsed, and but rarely have Cousrouf Pacha, his new grandeur, and the great things the future had in store for him, been heard of in Cavalla. And now a letter announces that Cousrouf Pacha still remembers, and gladly remembers, former days :

"The Sublime Porte has determined," so read the pacha's letter to the governor, "the Sublime Porte has determined to oppose the French occupation of Egypt with energy. The rich land of Egypt belongs to the Sublime Porte, and without any color of right France takes possession of it as its own property."

Yes, the republic of France had done this, had landed at Alexandria with large armies, and had inundated almost the whole of Egypt with its soldiers. But the Mameluke Beys, who have so long considered themselves the masters of the country, had taken the field and fought the invaders. In Stamboul, also, they had long been preparing for war, and now that all preparations were made, and an army ready to take the field against the French, each province, yes, each village of the empire, was to furnish its quota of soldiers in addition. Messengers had been sent out to every city and village in the empire to call on the young men in the name of the grand-sultan to flock to the flag to defend Egypt.

Cavalla was also to furnish its quota, and the pacha's instructions were, that the governor should with all speed uniform three hundred young men, and send them to him.

Cousrouf Pacha had, however, also written : "That the governor may see in what glad remembrance I hold the past, and that I am grateful, I request that his son Osman be placed at their head as captain, and come with them. And," continued the pacha, "as his lieutenant, young Mohammed Ali, if still living, may be serviceable. However, I suppose that his own violence and passion have consumed this young man, as he persistently labored at his own destruction. If this, however, is not the case, and his extraordinary strength of constitution has preserved him, the youth must have become a strong man, and we need such men for our army."

The governor informed Mohammed and his son of what the pacha had written. He requested Mohammed to assist him in recruiting and equipping the men, and Mohammed willingly gave his assistance. He repaired to Praousta and the neighboring places and assisted in the work. He soothed the displeasure of the men called on to take the field, spoke of the heroic deeds they could perform, and of the beautiful land to which they were to go, so distant from the quiet, desolate Praousta.

And in a few days the three hundred men were ready to embark. But how was it with regard to the captain and his lieutenant? Osman had reserved his decision for the last day, and Mohammed seemed to have entirely forgotten that he was selected as the captain's lieutenant. He had not spoken of it during these days; Cousrouf's mention of him seemed to have made no impression on him, and his attention appeared to have been directed wholly to the equipment of the soldiers. Now that all was in readiness, Osman sent his friend word to come to him, as he wished to converse with him on a matter of grave importance. Mohammed willingly acceded to this request and repaired at once to the garden-house, where, since the days of his childhood, a couch had at all times stood in readiness for the governor's poor, sickly son, and seated himself at his side, as he was in the habit of doing.

"You wished to see me about something, Osman. What is it?"

"What is it?" said Osman, with his softest smile, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder and regarding him fixedly. "Well, I should think you ought to know. Try to divine it!"

Mohammed slowly shook his head. "By Allah, I am ignorant what it is, Osman!"

"Well," said the latter, smiling, "I wish to speak of our departure with the troops."

"What do you mean by that?"

"What do I mean? The pacha, Cousrouf, has appointed me captain of the three hundred soldiers, and you my lieutenant."

"He has done so, to be sure, but we of course decline the appointment," said Mohammed, shrugging his shoulders.

"And why?" asked Osman, with an expression of profound astonishment.

"Why? Well, my Osman, you surely cannot think of—"

"I understand you," said Osman, nodding his head; "you mean I cannot think of accepting any such position as it would beseem a man of my rank to hold. But I feel myself in better health; it seems as though the thought of such a possibility had given me new strength and energy. Who knows, perhaps, the luxurious, effeminate life I have always led is the great cause of my ill-health and weakness; a new or adventurous life may do me good. It is often said that the greater part of disease is mere imagination. If one shakes this off, he shakes his disease off with it. Therefore, I have decided to try this remedy myself. After full consideration, I have concluded to accept the position of captain of our troops."

"You are really in earnest!" exclaimed Mohammed, springing to his feet in alarm. "You will actually take this position of captain, go to the war, and leave us!"

"Leave us?" repeated Osman. "No, we two, of course, remain together, my friend. You go with me. You are selected as my lieutenant. You know Cousrouf Pacha added words of praise and acknowledgment for you, too."

Mohammed's eye glittered for a moment, but he looked down quickly. "Yes, he did this, and his conduct is very noble and generous, for he well knows that I do not love him, and that I was once his enemy."

"Once," repeated Osman, closely regarding his friend. "But that was a long while ago, and we have done with the dreams of our youth long since, have we not, Mohammed? What then was, has passed away. He no longer thinks of the childlike defiance you displayed toward him, the great pacha; and the sorrow and suffering he caused you are long since forgotten."

"Yes," replied Mohammed, in low tones, "yes, it is forgotten. All sorrow and suffering are over. You are right. All things pass away, and time heals all wounds—mine, too. They are healed. Cousrouf has forgotten the boy's defiance, as you say, and you observe that what I have suffered at his hands is also forgotten. But I shall not leave this place—I may not."

"You may and you shall," said Osman, and there was a more earnest and manly ring in his voice than Mohammed had ever before heard. "Do you not suppose, my boy, my beloved, my second self—do you not suppose that I read your soul, and know what is smouldering and lamenting in your inmost heart? Mohammed, I believe you do not wish to understand yourself. You have enveloped your heart in a veil which you do not wish to rend asunder, even before your own vision. But I, my Mohammed, can see through this covering, and know your heart's most secret thoughts. Be still—say nothing yet. First consider, and then give me a reply. Your Osman accepts the position, and it seems to me it would become his friend Mohammed to go with him where laurels, glory, and magnificence, are awaiting you. Look at me, my friend; look at the poor, frail body for which you are so necessary a support, and let us be silent about all the rest for the present. Yet do not forget that Osman loves you, and is ready to make any sacrifice for you. Say nothing now, Mohammed, but reflect on what I have said. And if you love me, and think you owe me your love, and wish to prove your friendship for me, accept the proffered position, and go out with me into the world. Go, and reflect about it, Mohammed, and, when you have decided, come to me with your answer."

Mohammed left the garden as his friend had asked him, the words "you must go with me where laurels, glory, and magnificence await you," resounding in his heart. He hears them everywhere, at home with his wife, in the midst of his family. And then the voice of reason would in its turn make itself heard: "You should not abandon the woman who rescued you from death, and has given you comfort, wealth, and position. You should not abandon the children, whom you are called on to instruct and protect."

"No, I ought not to go," he repeated to himself, as he sat down beside Ada, and called his children to him. "No, I must remain here."

And yet, again and again, Osman's words come back to him.

He could not bear to chat with his lips, while such voices were speaking in his heart. He must leave the house, seek solitude, and consult with his own thoughts. He made some pretence of pressing business requiring his attention, and went out into the street. He started to walk rapidly toward the spot on the rock, where he had so often sought solitude and consolation. Suddenly he felt a hand laid on his shoulder, he turned and saw the old Sheik of Praousta, the successor of Masa's father, who gave him a kindly greeting.

Mohammed always found pleasure with the old man of whom the people said that he had the gift of prophecy, and could read the future. Mohammed did not believe in this, but he did believe in his wisdom and experience of the world ; and knew that much was to be learned from the old man, who had been a great traveller, and had now returned to his home to rest, to spend the evening of his days as Sheik of Praousta.

"How fares it with you ?" repeated the sheik, fixing his large dark eyes on Mohammed in a kindly gaze.

"Well, my business affairs are prosperous."

The sheik shook his head. "It was not concerning such matters that I inquired. Ah, Mohammed, it is frequently well with our business affairs, and just the reverse with ourselves."

"Well, then, things go well with myself, also," replied Mohammed, but with averted gaze.

The old man shook his head. "I can read a man's thoughts on his forehead, Mohammed, and I tell you sad thoughts are inscribed on yours." And with another shake of the head he continued : "The governor has, as you know, raised a body of three hundred soldiers ; Osman has been appointed their captain, and yourself his lieutenant."

"Cousrouf Pacha is a generous man," said Mohammed, in a peculiar tone. "He graciously forgets the days that have been."

"No, my son," said the sheik, "Cousrouf Pacha is a proud, cruel man, and he now wishes to show himself to those who saw him in those days when he was powerless, and an exile, in his grandeur and magnificence. You must know, my son, that oftentimes that which seems noble and generous, consists really only of vaingloriousness and love of display."

"I thank you for these words, O sheik," cried Mohammed, with a fierce gesture, "I thank you for having spoken from my soul. Young as I then was, I believe I thoroughly understood this man, and I am glad you interpret my thoughts so well."

"Mohammed," said the sheik, after a pause, "you must accompany your young friend Osman."

"Osman! no, that is impossible; how can Osman fill such a position?"

"He can," said the sheik, "for you, Mohammed, will accompany him."

"No, sheik, I shall not accompany him; I shall remain here."

"You will remain here, and why?"

"I have a wife and children," replied Mohammed, quickly, as if speaking to himself. "I cannot separate myself from them. I must not think of it; I have a home, a family, a prosperous business, and I live a peaceful life; why, therefore, O sheik, go out into the troubled world to end my days, perhaps, in misery? Here, I know what I am—a respected merchant, a favorite of the governor, the friend of his son, and I may boast of your friendship, too, sheik. Tell me, why should I subject myself to the tempest of life again, and go to Egypt to fight the unbelievers? The distance is great, the future beset with danger and difficulties; and here I have happiness, and an assured future."

"You are right; the distance is great, and your future one of danger and difficulties," replied the sheik. "Yes, therein you are right, but you are wrong when you determine not to go."

"Wrong—wrong, you say?"

"Yes, Mohammed, you are wrong; for, though the way is long and the future one of danger and difficulty, yet is the reward that awaits you, laurels and renown, glorious."

"Sheik, do not speak thus to me," cried Mohammed, "do not tempt me to do what I may repent; what may bring misfortune upon my wife and children. No, rather tell me to silence these voices that are ever resounding in my heart. Oh, do not tell me to make ambition the pursuit of my life."

"And yet I must do so," replied the sheik. "I tell you, you would act with great injustice if you should refuse to awaken the hero that slumbers in you, if you should condemn the warrior to inactivity, for the sake of the merchant. Allah himself would be displeased, Mohammed, for he has given you the capacity to perform great things, and implanted great thoughts and plans in your heart. And now the way is open to you, and you can carry out these plans. Therefore, when you see Osman again, tell him that you will go with him. And now, farewell, Mohammed ; consult with your thoughts, and be strong."

Greeting Mohammed with a wave of his hand, the sheik turned and walked away, leaving his friend gazing after him in amazement.

The people are right : the sheik is a prophet ; else how could he know what he had discussed with Osman that day, inducing him to consider the matter and give his decision by the following morning ? But, then, if he is a prophet, he has also announced the truth and foretold the future. Very great things are in store for him, and the whole world of glory dreamed of in his youth lies open to him. This may then still be realized. No, Mohammed, deny yourself and be strong. Bow beneath the will of Allah ; and it surely cannot be his will that you should forsake wife and children, but, rather, that you should remain patiently with them.

He returned to his house, but it was in vain that he endeavored to silence the voices that whispered in his heart.

With earliest dawn he arose noiselessly from the couch on which he had passed a restless night.

The sun has risen ! Is it for the last time that he sees it mount above these cliffs ? Perhaps ! He ascends the mountain-rock, higher and higher. Now he stands still ; he is approaching a consecrated spot !

Why should he come to this place now ? His heart had never before permitted him to approach it since he had become Ada's husband. Why does he now long again to mount to the spot on which he had never stood after those days ? Since then he has become a man and another being. There he had exchanged vows of eternal love with his Masa ! There, all Nature heard him swear : "I love you alone, and no other woman shall ever stand at my side !"

The youth which had uttered these words died in him long ago. Mohammed Ali was now a man, had a wife, and children called him father; and the man had hitherto avoided treading on this consecrated ground. But now he is driven there by an irresistible longing!

He walks rapidly on, and is soon there.

He stands where he had stood with Masa; where he had called down imprecations on her head because he thought her faithless; where he had also listened in pious devotion to the holy revelation of her love.

Ten years have passed since then. What has remained of those hopes, and of that love?

His dreams have ended, and his illusions are dissipated.

"O Masa! and people call me a happy man. O Mother Khadra, look down into your son's heart! The voices I long since thought silenced forever, are again aroused—the voices of love and ambition. O mother, it is as though I saw you before me again, and heard you relate your dream! You saw your son standing upon the pinnacle of a palace, a sword uplifted in his hand, a crown encircling his brow, and you knew, mother, that this man with crown and sceptre, attired in purple, was your son; and this man transformed himself into an angel, and flew to you, and kissed you. The man you beheld as a prince and hero, has again transformed himself, and this time into a miserable merchant. Nothing has remained to him of the prince, and angel, and hero; he is nothing more than a poor worm of earth!"

He cries out loudly and fiercely. All the anguish of former days, all the ungratified longings of the past, are again awakened, and, long pent up, now break forth in a fiery flood, and sweep away and burn to ashes all reason, all calm reflection, all the fruit of these ten long, desolate years of tranquillity and patient industry.

After a struggle with himself, he arose, and a deep sigh, like a death-groan, escaped his breast.

It was his intention to go to Osman and say: "It is settled, I remain! I have just committed a murder on myself; I have killed Mohammed Ali, the eagle, as his mother called him, and there remains only the merchant Mohammed! He will creep on, composedly, over the surface of the earth, collecting tobacco, rolling it into great balls, and rejoicing when he finds his profit in so doing."

But it seemed as though his footsteps were clogged, as though an invisible hand held him back, and compelled him to remain a while longer on this spot where he had stood with Masa. And now it seemed to him that her form suddenly arose from her cold grave in the waves over there beyond the cliffs. She was arrayed in purple, her starlike eyes were fixed on him, and her long hair enveloped her beloved form as with a golden veil, the water dripping from her like glittering pearls. It gradually arose out of the waters. He had seen such visions, such *fata morgana*, that appeared not unfrequently on this coast, many a time, and had hitherto smiled at such illusions. But to-day he forgot his knowledge and experience, and the illusion was to him reality. He stretched out his arms, and gazed at the heavenly picture that had risen out of the waves, and his lips whispered in longing accents: "Masa, come to me; let the water that drips from you fall on my burning heart, soothe my anguish; speak to me of my future, and tell me what you desire me to do. Oh, speak to me, Masa!"

Enraptured, he still gazed out into the air at the sweet vision that rose higher and higher out of the waves. At last it stretched out its arms over him, and a cold breath kissed his lips! After a long pause, he opened his eyes again. Had he been dreaming? Was it reality? He lay on the rock alone in the morning light of the sun. The image had disappeared, and silence surrounded him, profound silence.

And in this silence Mohammed formed his last, his decisive resolve. As he lay there, he had entreated Allah to deliver him, by death, from this tormenting struggle, this doubt. The hour of irresolution had now passed, and he felt strengthened with renewed life. He looked up at the heavens, and a hitherto undreamed-of world seemed to lie open before him. He looked out into the purple distance, and he seemed to behold the minarets, and temples, and mountains, and plains of a new land. Was he never to reach this land? Were all the dreams of his youth to come to naught, and the prophecies made by the woman who had told his mother that he was to be a hero, to remain unfulfilled? And was Masa to remain unavenged in her cold grave? He has duties to fulfil toward wife and children. But revenge is also a sacred duty, and he has sworn to himself a thousand times, that he will perform this duty. Vengeance for Masa! Vengeance on him! The hour has come! Grasp the occasion! He may fail in his career, but, if successful, his success will be great, divine. It will be heavenly, if he must die, to fall on the field of battle amid the roar of artillery, and the clash of arms. Such a death were far preferable to a life like that he now leads, protracted through long, weary years. Who has brought about this struggle, and implanted these aspirations in his breast? It is Allah's work! In his early youth, his mother had told him of her dreams, and hope for her boy! Who was it that arose from the waves and permitted him to see in her dewy hand a sword and a crown! It was Masa, his Masa! These three, Allah, his mother, and Masa, have spoken to him, and Mohammed has heard and understood their words.

As he stands there on the verge of the cliff, gazing out into the distance, and listening to the sea murmuring at his feet, he now feels that he is the instrument chosen to do great deeds. He must obey Destiny, he must respond to the appeal of revenge, of honor, and of renown. And a threatening voice whispers in his soul: "Cousrouf Pacha, beware! You have called your judge yourself. Beware, the avenger will appear! You will not recognize him, for his countenance will smile, and his bearing will be soft and composed. You will not recognize him, but he will come. Beware, Cousrouf Pacha!"

Mohammed now turns to descend to Cavalla, and he feels himself a changed, a new man.

He slowly descended, his head erect, his breast swelling with a proud joyousness. The struggle is over, and the voice of anguish is forever stilled. Mohammed comes among men again another and a better man, and, before returning to his own house, he repairs to the palace of the tschorbadji, to seek his friend Osman.

When Osman saw him coming he smiled, nodded to him, and held out his hand.

"Well, my Mohammed, I see by your countenance that the struggle is over, and that Mohammed knows what future is in store for him."

Mohammed grasped his friend's hand warmly in his own, a bright smile lighting up his countenance.

"He at least knows, my Osman, what demands he intends to make of the future, and, if they are not accorded, he will at least know how to die gloriously."

CHAPTER IV.

THE EMBARKATION.

"Is it then really true, Osman?" asked the governor, with tears in his eyes. "Have you resolved to leave me and assume command of the troops?"

"Yes, my dear father, I have. It is time I showed myself to be a man! And do you not think the uniform of a bim bashi will become me well; and that I, too, have some desire to parade in my finery before beautiful women, and be honored with their gracious looks?"

"You are jesting, my son," said the tschorbadji, sadly. "With a grave air your lips speak joyous words of which your heart knows nothing. No, you cannot deceive your father. It is not the uniform that charms you, nor has or can war have any thing attractive for you."

"You mean by that, father, that a sickly, weak man, like myself, can take no pleasure in military service. Believe me, it will make me healthier and stronger. I have been treated like an invalid long enough, and have not benefited by such treatment. Let us now defy fate and ill health. Moreover," he continued, after a short pause, "moreover, I have chosen Mohammed to be my companion, my lieutenant, in order that I might have a strong arm to lean on. With Mohammed at my side, I shall have no fear in the conflict. His presence will give me the needful strength. I tell, you I feel stronger and better already. But now let me go and put on my uniform. And do you not think you will be proud of my soldierly appearance yourself when you walk down to the ship with me, and hear people whisper to each other: 'That is Osman! We would not have believed him to be so stately and strong a man!' Tell me, would this not gladden your heart?"

He nodded to his father, and without awaiting his answer turned and went hastily to his apartments, to put on his uniform.

The tschorbadji looked after him sadly.

"If I could only discover what secret purpose induces my son to play the soldier! I will ask Mohammed, and also request him to watch over my son."

He went down into the court-yard where Mohammed, dressed in the uniform of the boulouk bashi again, was engaged in drawing up his soldiers in rank and file, preparatory to marching them down to the harbor, where they were to embark. He beckoned to Mohammed to come into the hall, and laid his hand gently on his shoulder. "I can count on you, my friend, can I not?"

"Tschorbadji, you can count on me at all times, while life lasts!"

"You will watch over my Osman?" said he, in low tones. "You will not permit him to undertake that which his body is unable to bear, though his spirit be well equal to the task?"

"I will care for him as though he were my better self, as I would for the woman I love!" said Mohammed. "I well know that his spirit is strong, but his body is delicate. And therefore when he goes into danger, and I cannot prevent it, I will protect him unto death, with my own body! This I swear to you by Allah, and by my love for my friend Osman!"

"I thank you, Mohammed," said the tschorbadji, deeply moved. "My Osman is my only joy in life. You are a father, too, Mohammed, and you know how a father loves his child."

"I do, tschorbadji," replied he, "and as a father I beg you to look after my children sometimes. You are related to them through their mother; shield and protect them, and if the news should come that destiny has been unfavorable to me, or favorable if you will, and I shall have fallen on the field of battle, think of this moment, and watch over my boys! They will be well provided for, as far as the goods of this world are concerned. I have made over all I possess, and all I have earned since I began my business, to my wife; from this hour all that was mine is hers. I take nothing out into the world with me; I will enter it as a new man. It all came from my wife, and it is now restored to her. I am going out into the world a new man, but the old love will remain here in Cavalla with my wife and with you, and it will accompany me in the person of my beloved Osman. You need have no fear on our account. While I live, Osman shall be protected and watched over."

While they were conversing in the hall, Osman was putting on the uniform of the bim bashi. His faithful slaves were assisting him, and rejoiced in his magnificence; and as he now stood before them in his gold-embroidered uniform, his too slender waist encircled with a broad leather girdle, from which dangled his sword with its golden hilt, and to which his two pistols, with jewelled stocks, were attached, his slaves cried out with delight, and fell on their knees and kissed his feet.

He told them to rise and to get themselves ready, as these two faithful servants were to accompany him.

When they had gone, Osman sank down upon his cushions exhausted.

"O Allah, give me strength sufficient to walk down to the shore with the appearance of health.—Be strong, poor, weak breast, suppress your pain until I have reached the ship!—Make me strong, Allah, until my aim is attained, until I have proved to my friend that I love him."

Hearing footsteps approaching, he sprang to his feet and assumed a cheerful and composed manner, as his father and Mohammed came in and announced that all was in readiness for their departure, and that the soldiers were only waiting for their bim bashi to march down to the shore.

"I, however, my bim bashi, have come with a request," said Mohammed, quickly, "and I hope he will not refuse his boulouk bashi's first request. I beg you, Osman, to go with your father in advance to the shore, and take up your position there. I will then follow with the soldiers, and pass with them in review before you. This is appropriate, and you must allow the boulouk bashi and the soldiers to show you these honors."

"If such is the custom, then let it be so," said Osman, smiling.—"Let us now go, father, as Mohammed requests."

"But I also have a request to make, my son," said the tschorbadji. "I have met with an accident: in crossing the court-yard I sprained my ankle slightly, and I cannot walk, as it pains me. You must therefore do me the kindness to allow yourself to be carried down with me in the palanquin. It will excite no surprise; the soldiers saw me when the accident occurred, and no one will suppose it is on your account."

"It seems to me, father," replied Osman, gravely, "that the bim bashi should walk down, and await his soldiers standing."

"And he shall," said his father, quickly. "Below he shall await his soldiers, standing, while the poor tschorbadji must remain seated in his palanquin.—Oh, the pain! Let me support myself on your arm, Mohammed! You have no idea how my foot hurts!"

Osman averted his face, that they might not see the tears that stood in his eyes. He discerned, only too well, that they both knew his weakness and were tenderly caring for him!

But, in spirit at least, he must be a man, and he turns and looks at them firmly and composedly.

"Then come, father. I will go down with you in the palanquin."

The slaves and servants saw the tschorbadji, supported by Mohammed, limp to the palanquin; Osman followed them with firm footstep, his head proudly erect. The people rejoiced in his stately appearance, and in the glittering uniform that became him so well.

Osman was carried down to Praousta at his father's side. The fishermen, who stood there awaiting him, greeted the young bim bashi with loud huzzas. They wished him happiness and success in his military career.

Osman thanked them in a loud, clear voice, and no one knew what pain the effort cost him. Arrived at the shore, he stepped out of the palanquin with an appearance of joyous haste, and took up his position beside his father to receive from the soldiers, who were now approaching, Mohammed at their head, the military honors. And now the hour of leave-taking had arrived. The admiral's boat had come to convey the bim bashi to the ship. The tschorbadji insisted on accompanying his son on board, and seated himself beside him in the boat into which the slaves and servants who were to go with Osman now also entered.

Mohammed had declined to go with them to the vessel. The soldiers must first be embarked, and the boulouk bashi will be the last to leave the shore, for this the military law requires.

The boats were soon filled with the soldiers, and the bay, covered with all kinds of skiffs, boats, and barks, now presented a very gay, lively spectacle. The entire population of Praousta and Cavalla were assembled on the shore to witness the embarkation.

Ada and her boys had also come down, and were gathered around the husband and father to take leave of him ; beside them stood Mohammed's old friend, the merchant Lion. As the boats now began to put off from the shore, Mohammed took his wife's hand and led her aside, away from the others.

" Ada, my wife," said he, " I bid you a last farewell ! "

She sobbed beneath her veil, and tears poured in streams from her eyes.

" You weep on my account," said he ; " that proves that I have at least not made my wife unhappy, and that she is not glad to be alone."

" Ah, Mohammed," murmured she, " happy have you made me, and I owe you thanks for many glad years ! "

" And I thank you for these words," said he, gently. " I will take them with me as an amulet to protect me without, in the world. Think of me, and watch over my children. Care for them, and do not let them become the drones or drudges of existence. Remember that their father is a soldier, and that he remains one to the end ! Raise my children with reference to this ! Have them instructed, Ada, for my sons must not come as ignorant soldiers to my army ! "

"To your army ?" exclaimed Ada, regarding him in astonishment—"your army ?"

He started ; his inmost thoughts had for a moment escaped his lips. "The army in which I serve !" said he, quickly. "Have my boys taught to read and write ; this is necessary, believe me. And now, farewell, and receive my thanks for all the beautiful days and years which you have sought to bless me with !"

He did not say, "which you have blessed me with." He did not wish to take leave of her with a falsehood on his lips, and his eye glanced over toward the place where Masa had sunk beneath the waves. There lay his happiness buried, and from that grave it had never risen. Ada knew it not, he had never complained, and never seemed discontented ; she had thought him happy. His love and thirst for revenge had hitherto slumbered, but now they were awakened to new life. He would have vengeance on him who had murdered her he loved, and heaped insult upon himself ! He is now going out into the world, where he must meet Cousrouf Pacha, and on him will he wreak vengeance for all his wrongs and sufferings ! Yes, his Masa, his white dove, shall be avenged !

With such thoughts, Mohammed enters the boat that rapidly conveys him to the ship where Osman stands on the deck awaiting him.

"Welcome, Mohammed ! We are on the road to honor and renown !"

"Yes, my Osman, to honor and renown," responded Mohammed.

"And may Allah's blessing accompany you !" said the tschorbadji, holding his son in his arms in a farewell embrace. He then enters the boat that awaits him, and is rowed back to the shore.

Osman stands on the deck beside his friend ; the soldiers stand around, silent and respectful in the presence of their bim bashi, and now the farewell gun is fired.

The governor, Ada, and the merchant, who stand in a group on the shore, wave their handkerchiefs : "Farewell, farewell !"

Mohammed turns to Osman. "Be joyous, my friend !

We have done with the past, and a brilliant future awaits us! Look, there rests my Masa, and, I tell you, a monument prouder and grander than was ever erected to woman, shall rise over her grave! The whole sea shall be her monument, and on the coast of Egypt will I erect one to my Masa, to my love, and my revenge!"

CHAPTER V.

THE CAMP AT ABOUKIR.

THE life of the Mameluke beys had for months been a continuous festival. Nothing but pleasure and festivity; nothing but assurances of love and friendship on the part of their former enemies, the Turks.

Since the hated Franks, after so many struggles, so many defeats and fruitless shedding of blood, had embarked in their proud ships and returned to Europe, the prospects for peace in the land that was bleeding from a thousand wounds seemed to be bright. Friends and enemies had made these wounds; friends and enemies had torn the once fair form of the beautiful land of the Pharaohs, and converted it into a hideous corpse.

The battle-fields of Aboukir, the Pyramids of Gheezeh, the blood-soaked fields of Syria, the overthrown walls of St. Jean d'Acre, and of the magnificent city of the caliphs, Cairo, tell of the French general, Bonaparte, who, at the head of his army, had entered upon a crusade in order to bless Egypt with civilization. This was his pretext. He intended, with his *sans culottes*, to carry civilization to the Orient, and, not being able to convert them to Christianity by persuasion or trickery, he determined to baptize them with blood.

At first the Mameluke beys, who until then had ruled in Egypt, and had, in protracted struggles, endeavored to cast off their allegiance to the grand-sultan, had supposed it would be an easy matter to drive back the French barbarians from the yellow shores of Africa.

Mourad Bey, the chief of all the Mameluke beys, was sitting at a joyous banquet in Alexandria, when several of his officers rushed into the hall to announce that a number of ships were entering the harbor, and that a body of Franks had already landed. The Mameluke chieftain laughed, and, without rising from his seat, said to the messengers: "Give these French beggars a *bakshish*, and tell them to clear out, or Mourad Bey will compel them to do so."

"But," observed the English consul, who had just entered the hall, "excellency, these Franks have come to possess themselves of Egypt. Hasten to make preparations for your defence."

Mourad Bey laughed again. "You take a gloomy view of things, my friend.—Go and give these wretches something to eat, and, as I have already ordered, a little money, also, and then advise them to depart with all speed, or I will have them driven off by my servants."

But the Franks were not to be driven off so easily. They were bringing civilization, the glory of the French Republic, to Egypt, and were determined to make them happy by force. The republic at home had become too small for the great general. "Europe is a mere mole-hill," he had said; "there never were great kingdoms and great enterprises elsewhere than in the Orient, where six hundred million people live!"

And it was indeed a great enterprise that Bonaparte wished to attempt in Egypt, and great things he really did accomplish there. So great were they, that General Kléber, in secret his enemy and rival, could nevertheless not refrain from saying, after one of the victories:

"You are as great, Bonaparte, as the world, but the world is too small for your glory!"

And yet a day had come when the man who was too great for the world had to make himself small before the victorious Mameluke beys, when he secretly, accompanied by a few faithful followers only, departed from Egypt to return to the mole-hill Europe, to seek a crown for himself there. Bonaparte had left behind, in want and misery, the army that had suffered so much, not only from battle and disease, but also from the cruelty of its leaders. Was it not at Jaffa that Bonaparte caused the sick and wounded to be poisoned, in order to shorten their sufferings? And one other deed of cruelty of the general of civilization, who had gone to Egypt to confer happiness upon the unbelievers, stands recorded in the books of history. Was it not in Egypt that the French general caused the prisoners of war who had surrendered to General Desaix to be led down to the seashore and shot, contrary to the usages of warfare? Four thousand Arabian soldiers were assassinated in this manner. This was one of the monuments of civilization erected by the French general in the Orient! And the revolt in Cairo, the massacre of so many French soldiers, and the hatred of the whole people, was the harvest reaped by Bonaparte for this bloody deed.

"Death to the Franks!" was the cry of every Egyptian—the cry that was common to the Mameluke chieftain and the lowest fellah.

"Death to the Franks!" murmured the sheiks and ulemas with each prayer. And when Bonaparte had secretly fled, this ominous cry resounded through all Egypt—"Death to the Franks!"

General Kléber, Bonaparte's successor, was the first victim sacrificed. At Cairo, on the grand square of the Esbekieh, under the large sycamore at a corner of the harem of one of the Mameluke beys, he was stricken down by the dagger of a fanatical Turk. And now terror and dismay possessed itself of the whole army, and not only were the Egyptians glad when the command came from Europe that the French soldiers should embark, but the latter also esteemed themselves happy when, from the decks of their ships, they saw the yellow coast of Africa gradually disappear. Since then, bright, happy days seemed to have come again for the proud Mameluke beys, and happiness appeared to dawn again over the stricken land. The English, who, off the coast of Egypt, had destroyed the French ships, their armada, were now masters of the situation. They united themselves with the Mameluke beys, and undertook to mediate between them and the Turkish ruler.

"Egypt is to be blessed with peace, and they who have so long contended with each other in bitter hostility are to extend their hands to each other. Let recognition be accorded to the Mameluke beys, and favorable conditions of peace offered them, and they will submit." This Lord Balan had announced to the grand-sultan, and his first servant, the grand-vizier, at Stamboul. And he had gone to and fro, from Cairo to Stamboul, from Stamboul to Cairo, until peace was at last, as it seemed, secured.

"The Mameluke beys," so read the last decision of the grand-sultan, Selim II., "are to leave Cairo and to go to Upper Egypt, where large tracts of land are to be assigned them, with their wives, their treasures, and their servants, to rule there in freedom and magnificence."

The Mamelukes took these propositions into favorable consideration ; they were weary of bloodshed and longed for the peaceful desert plains and for the sunny tents, where they could rest from their long struggles in quiet comfort, listen to the songs of the female slaves, and gaze at the voluptuous dances of the *almehs.* Yes, they will return home to the beloved south, to the cataracts of the Nile, to the sunny shores where the temple ruins of by-gone magnificence stand out against the deep blue sky.

Yes, they longed for peace, and for the sublime stillness of the desert ; they consented to Lord Balan's proposition, and declared themselves ready to meet the servants of the sultan, and arrange with them the boundaries of the tracts of land that were to be assigned to them, and to conclude peace. They had, therefore, in response to the invitation of the Turks, come out to the peninsula of Aboukir. There, on the wide plain that had three years before been drenched with the blood of the French and the Egyptians, now stood the stately tents of the Turks and the Mamelukes.

It was a splendid spectacle, the wide plain with its array of gayly-decorated tents, with its great squares, on which the Mamelukes mounted on their proud steeds, displayed their skill with the spear and the gun, exciting the admiration of the Turks by their skill and agility.

All was festivity, and life was enjoyed as though it were an uninterrupted chain of pleasures. Yet there were some who felt less contented than these Mameluke beys, some who had learned from the French that promises and assurances of friendship were not always to be relied on.

Many of the beys had brought their wives with them, for the wives of the beys enjoyed greater liberty than those of the Turks, and they could move about among the tents, with as little constraint as in the streets of Cairo. The Mameluke honors his bey's wife, and bows down in the dust before her, when she passes by with head erect and veiled countenance, followed by her slaves.

On this, the fourteenth day of their sojourn at Aboukir, the Mamelukes also bow profoundly before a woman who, followed by two servants, is passing down between the double row of tents, and whisper to each other: "This is the wife of our greatest chieftain, the deceased Mourad Bey! How does it happen that she has left her beautiful palace in Cairo? For what purpose has Sitta Nefysseh come to Aboukir?"

And when she had passed, the Mamelukes raised their heads and followed with their eyes the white form as it swept on between the tents, and observed with astonishment that Mourad Bey's widow had stopped at the tent of the bey who was now their first chief, at the tent of Osman Bey Bardissi. Mourad's widow, and those who accompanied her, entered this tent.

He lay on the divan, smoking his chibouque. But upon her appearance at the entrance to the tent, he sprang to his feet.

"You here, Sitta—you in the camp at Aboukir?"

"I have come to speak with you," she replied, earnestly.—"Let the rest leave the tent. Mourad's widow can be alone with the man whom her deceased husband called his dear friend."

He waved his hand imperiously, and all the servants withdrew from the tent, closing the gold-embroidered curtains behind them.

"Speak!" said the bey, in deferential tones. "Your servant hears, and is ready to obey your commands."

"I have not come to command," replied she; "I have come to warn you, Osman."

"To warn me, Sitta?"

"Yes, Osman. You have allowed yourselves to be deceived by the flattering words of those who call themselves your friends, but can never be other than your enemies. Do you suppose that the sultan will ever give you, his hated enemies—you, the haughty Mameluke beys—your rights and your freedom? I, who gazed in my dying Mourad's eyes and read his last thoughts, I say to you, that the sultan will not rest until death has closed your lips forever, or until you have closed his! I tell you they are planning your destruction. Do not ask from what source my information comes. The wise man will listen and take the advice of the woman who was his friend's wife. Demand this very day, that, after these long-continued festivities, the grave matters that call you here be immediately proceeded with; demand that the conditions on which the sultan is to make you free and independent in Upper Egypt be plainly stated. And if they will not name them, then embark in your boats before the sun sets, and return to Cairo; for, believe me, there alone will you be safe! I come to you in the name of Destiny, by whom I have been warned! My lord and master appeared to me last night in a dream, showed me his bleeding wounds, and said to me: 'Go and save my friends. Say to them that the last battle has not yet been fought at Aboukir, and tell them that, if they do not hasten to depart, the waves that encircle Aboukir will soon be reddened with their blood, as was the sand of Aboukir a few years ago!' And therefore have I come, O Osman, to warn you! Put away from you your confidence in these treacherous Turks. Do not hearken to the whisperings of the Englishmen, do not rely on the promises of your enemies. Require a decision this very day, and if it is not given, depart at once, before the setting of the sun. Danger threatens you all, great, fearful danger."

"Impossible, Sitta!" replied Osman Bey, composedly. "Impossible! We cannot depart to-day, and the decision cannot be made now. But I have already demanded it, and they have promised that these matters shall be arranged in the course of a few days."

"In the course of a few days!" repeated Sitta. "You have warned your enemies yourself, Osman! They have observed that distrust has begun to bud in your hitherto trusting heart, and with their swords and daggers they will destroy the tender plant in its first growth. By Allah, I conjure you, and by your love for my husband, be on your guard ; leave the peninsula, and return to Cairo !"

"If it were possible, Sitta, I would do it out of reverence for you. But on the morrow, I promise you, I will return to the continent. To-morrow, a festival takes place in Alexandria ; Lord Balan, the English general, is to receive his troops there, and the capitan pacha, who is encamped here with his warriors, has invited us to participate in the festivities at Alexandria."

"Beware, oh beware, Osman !" cried Sitta Nefysseh, extending her arms toward heaven. "By Allah and the prophets, I conjure you, go not to sea with the Turks to-morrow ! Listen to my words, Osman ! I have devoted servants with those whom you call your friends, but who can only be your enemies. One of them has informed me of their purpose. Before the harbor of Alexandria lies a Turkish fleet ; it lies in wait for you, and your boats will not be allowed to land unless freighted with your dead bodies !"

"This is not possible," cried the bey, recoiling a step in dismay. "They cannot have planned so fearful a deception ! They cannot be so faithless ! Are they not of our religion ; were the prophet's words not spoken for them as for us ? Do they not know that it is written in the Koran : 'Let a man hold his word sacred ! Curses and shame upon him who bears a lie on his lips, and yet seals it with the name of Allah and the prophet !' No, Sitta, I tell you the capitan pacha sealed his vow of friendship with the name of Allah and the prophet, and the settlement of the details only was wanting to establish this bond of friendship forever. No, Sitta, it is impossible that they should contemplate such fearful treachery, and rather will I die a victim of such treachery than cowardly flee, than consider men cowards, and warriors scoundrels !"

"Then you and yours are going to your death, Osman Bey Bardissi !" cried Nefysseh in tones of anguish. "I conjure you once more, be warned, and, if you will not depart to-day, at least do not follow the capitan pacha to the festival, but employ the time while he is absent in preparing to defend yourselves. And, when they return, refuse to allow them to land until they consent to come to you unarmed."

Osman Bey shook his head proudly ; and his countenance, before troubled, was now radiant with courage and joy. "Sitta Nefysseh, your noble heart is concerned for your friends, and I thank you in the name of all of us. But what your womanly sensitiveness fears, Osman Bey may not fear, and he must not show the Turks that he distrusts them ! Allah watches over us all, and his will must be fulfilled ! Why should we fear ?"

"Yet Allah often warns us in our dreams, and woe to us if we do not interpret them aright !" said Sitta Nefysseh, in tones of entreaty. "You insist, then, on going to Alexandria to-morrow ?"

"It is so determined, Sitta, and a man keeps his word !" His arms folded on his breast, he bowed down profoundly before her, and kissed the hem of her flowing gold-embroidered dress.

"Then may Allah accompany you !" said she, with a profound sigh. "But let me say one thing more. When you behold my husband Mourad, up there, among the blessed, standing under the green flag of the prophet, say to him : 'Your wife has done her duty, she gave Osman the warning ! She is innocent of our death !' and say to him also that his wife remains faithful to him in all things, and that she will love him alone throughout life. And now, farewell, Osman Bey Bardissi, and think of me in your death-hour !"

She raised her hands as if in a blessing, and then turned slowly away, drew aside the curtain, and stepped out of the tent to where her slaves and eunuchs awaited her.

Slowly she walked down the pathway between the tents, bowing to the right and to the left to the Mamelukes, who threw themselves down before her in profound reverence. But when she passed by the tents of the Turks she veiled her countenance more closely, and her eyes glanced angrily through the delicate fabric.

"Traitors are they all !" murmured she, as she entered the tent where she dwelt with the women of Cousrouf, the second

Mameluke chieftain. "Yes, traitors, and our Mamelukes will be their victims! Yet I will endeavor to save as many of them as possible!"

While Sitta Nefysseh sat sorrowing on her cushion, paying but little attention to the songs which the slaves sang, and to the dances with which they sought to entertain their mistress, the joyous festivities of the Mamelukes and Turks were still going on. Osman Bey had promised to show his horsemanship to-day; and it was a beautiful spectacle to see him coursing along on his splendidly-caparisoned black charger, his sword uplifted in his hand. His eyes sparkled even more lustrously than the gems in the agraffe of the crescent on the sultan's turban. In the sash that encircled his waist glittered a pair of pistols and the jewelled hilt of a dagger, and whoever beheld Osman Bey said to himself: "This is a man! a hero who recoils from nothing!" Lightly bounding, his nostrils expanded, his eyes glowing, he now rode his steed around the wide circle of Mamelukes and Turks. With uplifted sword he then approached the horse that stood tied to a stake in the middle of the circle. Trembling, and neighing anxiously, it saw the hero bearing down upon it at a full gallop; then Osman's sword glittered in the air, and the horse's head fell to the ground, severed from the body by a single blow. Loud and exulting shouts rewarded the bold rider for this proof of his wonderful skill and strength, and Osman bowed smilingly to the right and to the left, and then again drew in his reins, and made his steed bound as lightly and coquettishly as though it had learned its arts from the bayaderes.

Yes, Osman Bey is a great hero, and they all regard him with astonishment, the Mamelukes with joyous smiles, the Turks with serious countenances. While Osman Bey Bardissi lives, peace with the Turks is not to be thought of; while life lasts, he will aspire to greater eminence and power.

"How can peace be made with this powerful, haughty chieftain?" This is also murmured by the capitan pacha, who stands on the deck of the admiral's ship, and he orders that the Turkish ships weigh anchor, and sail out of the harbor of Alexandria. Yes, Sitta Nefysseh was right: the enemy lies in wait there. Three large Turkish ships have been lying at anchor there ever since the Mameluke beys have been holding *fêtes* with the Turks at Aboukir. But to-day a fourth ship has arrived from Stamboul—a ship manned with three hundred well-equipped soldiers ; and her captain's name is Osman, and his lieutenant is called Mohammed Ali.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MASSACRE.

The capitan pacha had himself come over in his admiral's ship to greet the newly arrived soldiers, and to review the fleet of stately vessels-of-war. He graciously caused Osman, the bim bashi, and Mohammed Ali, the boulouk bashi, to be presented to him.

"You have employed the time well during your passage," said he, slightly inclining his proud head. "You have converted rude peasants into disciplined soldiers."

"It is not my work," replied Osman, who stood attired in his full uniform before the capitan pacha. "No, excellency, I suffered from the unaccustomed sea-voyage, and could hardly leave my cabin. Mohammed Ali deserves all the credit ; he drilled the soldiers on the deck incessantly, day and night."

"Well done, well done !" said the pacha. "His services will be recognized and rewarded."

"I beg your excellency to see that they are," said Osman, quickly. "Truly my boulouk bashi deserves to be rewarded. I should like to take the liberty of suggesting how he can be rewarded."

With a haughty and astonished expression, the capitan pacha regarded the young man that stood blushing before him, his eyes sparkling with unaccustomed lustre. He considered it somewhat presumptuous to advise him, the capitan pacha. Yet this is not a time to be ungracious. The newly-arrived soldiers are to be used this very day, and should be kindly and cordially treated.

"Then tell me, bim bashi, how can I reward your lieutenant? I will gladly do so, if it is in my power."

"You have the power, if you have the will. I beg you to give the boulouk bashi my position."

"Give him your position! And what is to become of you?"

"Of me?" said Osman, smiling sadly. "Only what I have always been—a poor, weak invalid. Cousrouf Pacha, our distinguished guest, wished to show me a kindness, and, with this intention, appointed me bim bashi. Yet I at once feared that my poor body would not be able to bear the fatigues of the service. I am weary and exhausted, and my weak arm falls to my side when I attempt to raise the sword. I beg that your excellency will graciously permit me to return home with the ship to Cavalla, after the soldiers shall have been disembarked. I also entreat of your excellency that my boulouk bashi be made captain in my stead."

The capitan pacha turned and looked at young Mohammed Ali. Perhaps his tall, well-knit frame, and his earnest countenance, with its sparkling eyes, and his determined bearing, impressed him favorably.

"Bim bashi, we will see what can be done. It will depend chiefly on the events of this day, and I will observe your boulouk bashi closely. If he proves capable of doing well what I shall require of him, I give you my word he shall be made bim bashi, and you shall then be permitted to return to your home. I will, however, first observe your boulouk bashi, and see of what stuff he is made. —I have orders for you, boulouk bashi. But first tell me your name."

"I am called Mohammed Ali, son of Ibrahim Aga," replied Mohammed, inclining his head with an expression of such profound reverence that the proud capitan pacha was well pleased, and smiled graciously.

"Mohammed Ali, son of Ibrahim Aga, step aside with me; I have something to say to you."

The pacha walked to the end of the deck, motioning to the two slaves who accompanied him to withdraw; he then turned to Mohammed, who stood before him, his head bowed down in humility, his ear all attention to the words spoken by the pacha, in low, impressive tones.

Important words, of great and dangerous import, must they have been, that fell slowly one after the other, like drops of blood from the pacha's lips, for, from time to time, a deathly pallor overspread Mohammed Ali's cheeks, and a slight shudder coursed through his whole being. The pacha looked at him keenly, and said in a low voice, "One can see that you are a novice."

"Yes, a novice," replied Mohammed, "but I shall soon become accustomed to blood, and cease to recoil from dead bodies."

"Then you will achieve success in Egypt," said the pacha. "The air here is freighted with the scent of corpses, and the sea and the Nile have often been reddened with blood. We will see, boulouk bashi, if the waves at our feet are not once more made red with blood, and not with the rays of the setting sun. And now, boulouk bashi, it will be shown whether you have understood what I have said, and whether you are the man to execute my orders."

"I am your servant, excellency," replied Mohammed, quietly. "The soldier has no will of his own. I am an instrument in your hands, and I will faithfully carry out your orders."

"Then you will awaken to-morrow as bim bashi. And I believe that will only be the first step toward the fame that awaits you. I like you, boulouk bashi, and I wish you a brilliant career. And when you shall have reached the summit of renown, then remember, boulouk bashi, that it was I who gave you the key to the gates of honor. Remember the day and the hour, for I have read a great future in your countenance."

He then inclined his head to Mohammed Ali, and returned to where Osman was standing, leaning against a mast, in utter exhaustion.

The pacha also spoke a few kindly words to him, and afterward entered his boat to return to the shore of Aboukir. Mohammed then walked up to his friend, took him in his arms like a child, and carried him down into his cabin. He laid him on the divan, knelt down beside him, and whispered in his ear: "Osman, no matter what you may see or hear, do not leave your cabin to-day. Stay here, my friend, and do not be anxious; if you hear a tumultuous noise, and outcries, do not be alarmed, even if death-groans should resound from the deck. The world is a hard thing, and he whose hands are not of iron should hold himself aloof from its rude contact. You, my Osman, are too good to play an active *rôle* in this miserable earthly existence; and I am, therefore, almost glad that you are to return to Cavalla; I repeat it, you are too good for this world."

"If it depended on goodness, Mohammed," said Osman, smiling, "you should not serve the world either, for you have a better heart than any of us."

Mohammed shook his head. "You are mistaken, you look at me with your kindly eyes, and give me credit for your noble thoughts. I am not good, no, do not believe that of me! Now that we are about to separate, I do not wish you to be deceived in your Mohammed Ali; I am only good when with you, and under the influence of your gentle nature; I fear I have the stuff in me of which hard and cruel men are made. But let us drop this subject. Duty calls me away. And let me repeat this, Osman, whatever outcries you may hear, whatever fearful noises may resound through your cabin, remain quietly here; remain here in peace, my Osman. The pack will soon be let loose, and your Mohammed, whom you call good, has been chosen by Fate to howl with it, and make common cause with the bloodhounds. Do not speak, Osman. Through blood must I march onward to my goal! There is no other road. Farewell, and remain here."

He ascended hastily to the deck, called the soldiers together, spoke to them for a long time in low, impressive tones, and issued his orders. They listened attentively to his words, and then hastily began to carry out his orders. They load their guns, try the locks, and then repair to the port-holes on the lower deck, and hold themselves in readiness to fire at the word of command.

There is to be a merry chase to-day. But after what game? Who has seen it? No one knows as yet.

The boulouk bashi will give the signal, and when he says "Fire!" they will fire, no matter at what or at whom. The command will be given, and they will obey. It will be their first deed of arms, their baptism of fire.

The hour has not yet come. Mohammed is standing on the deck above, leaning against the mast, his arms crossed on his breast, looking over toward the shores of Aboukir.

There all is gayety; the decorated boats dance merrily and rapidly over the waves; the Mameluke beys are going by sea to Alexandria, to take part in the festival of the newly-arrived admiral. There will be warlike games and races; a grand banquet is prepared for the guests; there will be music, dancing, and singing; altogether it will be a most brilliant festival. The Mameluke beys esteem themselves happy in having been invited by the capitan pacha to take part in this glorious festival. To-morrow peace will be concluded between them and the grand-sultan. To-morrow their lands will be given them and the boundaries determined, but let to-day be a *fête* day, a day of rejoicing.

Mourad's widow, Sitta Nefysseh, is standing at the entrance of her tent, her countenance closely veiled, looking at the Mamelukes who are going down to the shore to their boats. She sees that the Turks stand aside, and that only the Mamelukes enter the boats.

"You are not going with us?" ask the astonished beys of their Turkish friends. They shake their heads, and only step farther back from the shore.

"No, ye proud beys, this honor is for you alone, you alone go with the capitan, you alone are invited to attend the grand festival of the English admiral, Lord Hutchinson. We remain here to await longingly your return, in order that you may tell us of the brilliant festival. We remain here!"

"They remain," repeated Sitta Nefysseh; "they remain because death goes with the others in their boats. O Osman Bardissi! why would you not hearken to my words? I shall remain also, to await our dead."

In the large, richly-decorated boat, stood the capitan pacha, and beside him the chief Mameluke beys; among them are Osman Bardissi, the hero, the favorite of all the women, and

Osman Tamboudji, now one of the most distinguished of all the beys. These two, especially, have been invited by the capitan to sail with him in his boat, and while with him what have they to fear?

Sitta Nefysseh murmurs to herself:

"He takes them into his boat in order to deceive them. This is surely to conceal some trickery, and when the boat lands at Alexandria, the capitan pacha will not be with the Mameluke beys."

The Mamelukes have entered the boats joyously, and joyously they sail out over the waves, toward the shores of Alexandria.

The day is beautiful, and the sunshine glitters upon the water; laughter and jesting resound from every boat; but now, when Osman Bardissi begins to sing a warlike song, all are silent and listen attentively. He sings words with which he has often led his hosts out to battle. And the rest, at the end of each verse of the glorious old song, shout exultingly from boat to boat, and unite in the joyous chorus:

"The bey lifts high his sword, and down it sweeps upon his proud foe's head! Down swoops the bey, and raises high in air the severed head, and, when he homeward rides, the head hangs dangling at his saddle's side!"

"A beautiful, a glorious song!" exclaims the capitan, as it is ended, and its last accords resound over the waters.

But what is this? A strong boat is approaching, the admiral's boat of some strange vessel that has probably only just arrived in the harbor. Signals are given in the boat, and a flag is waved. The flag proclaims what the capitan expected. The young boulouk bashi, who stands in the admiral's boat, holds up a folded paper. It is an official letter, the large red seals that hang from it by silken strings show it to be such. The capitan pacha calls the attention of the Mameluke beys to the boat now rapidly approaching.

"Alas, the service leaves one no time, not even a short hour, for recreation and merrymaking. See, here comes another messenger! What can he want? The capitan pasha is, after all, a mere servant. See! The messenger holds the paper higher and beckons to me. No, he shall not break in upon the joy of our festival with his presence! This beautiful boat shall not be desecrated with business matters! Come closer, and I will get into your boat and read the letter."

"But after you have read it, capitan Pacha," says Osman Bardissi, in a frank, kindly voice, "after you have read it and have disposed of this annoying business matter, you will come back to our boat, will you not? we will wait for you."

"Yes, wait for me! But it may, after all, be necessary for me to return, to attend to some important affairs with my officials, instead of enjoying myself with you. Therefore you had best go on, my friends, and, if Allah permits me to join you in your festivities to-day, I will hoist a signal, and you can stop for me and take me in again." The capitan then steps into the strange boat. The two proud beys see him take the paper from the hands of the stranger boulouk bashi, break the seals, and read it.

With his eagle glance, Osman Bey Bardissi observes that the capitan pacha's countenance becomes gradually clouded as he reads.

"He will not have time to return to us," says Tamboudji Bey, who stands at his side. "It seems that grave intelligence has reached him. Yes, it is so," the boat being rapidly rowed toward the admiral's ship. "But look, Osman Bey!" he cries, in alarm, as he raises his arm and points to the departing boat, "look, there are swords in the boat!"

"Yes, I see! Swords, Turkish swords! What are they in there for?"

"That is what I should like to know," replies the other, nervously grasping the pistol in his girdle. "See, a ship is rapidly approaching, and the capitan is steering toward it! But that is not his ship! Where does it come from? What is it doing here?"

The countenance of the Mameluke chieftains is now threatening. They observe the ship, rapidly approaching, with an eagle's glance. They see the capitan ascend its side; they see the portholes filled with glittering muskets.

"Treachery! This is treachery!" cries Bardissi.

And he turns toward the other boats, and cries out to them : "Grasp your swords and prepare to defend yourselves. We are betrayed. The capitan pacha has deceived us, and"—a ball whistling close by his ear at this moment—" to your swords and pistols, my friends ; the enemy and treachery are upon us ! "

The Turks are rowing rapidly down upon them in their boats, while volleys of musketry are being discharged at them from the ship that is approaching nearer and nearer, following the Turkish troops that man the boats.

"Onward," cries Bardissi to his followers. "Onward ! We may escape. We may, if we make every effort, succeed in reaching Alexandria."

With the speed of the wind the boats sweep onward, and now turn into the bay of Aboukir.

The Mamelukes all cry, "Treachery ! treachery ! " and every one sees the three Turkish ships bearing down upon them from the front, while the boats and the strange vessel are coming upon them from the rear. From that direction comes the order, " Fire ! fire ! "

" Death-shrieks resound everywhere among the boats. But the proud Mamelukes are at least resolved to sell their lives dearly. They reply from their boats to the shots. Now the enemy's boats are among them, and a murderous but unequal conflict rages. The three men-of-war send whole volleys into the boats of the Mamelukes.

" Of what use to fire their pistols, how can they reload them ? Of what avail to draw their swords against the overwhelming foe ?

They can only die, and die they must. The flower of the hero-beys was gathered together in these boats, and is now being stamped under foot—is perishing, the victim of infamous treachery.

Sitta Nefysseh looks on in horror from where she lies on the shore of Aboukir. With outstretched arms she implores Allah for mercy, for revenge ; and now, as the volleys of artillery resound over the waters, she cries in earnest, piercing tones :

"O Mourad, my husband ! thou who art at Allah's side ;

thou who seest this treachery, implore vengeance upon the enemy!"

Yes, she prays to Allah and the prophet for vengeance. But while she prays, the blood of the Mamelukes is flowing in streams, saturating the costly carpets in the boats, and beginning to color the surrounding water.

A cry of rage resounds from Bardissi's lips. His friend Osman Tamboudji has just been stretched out at his feet by a ball. He has thrown away his pistol, and now grasps the hilt of his dagger, when he is suddenly stricken down by a blow upon the head, dealt from behind. The vessels have completely surrounded the Mamelukes; the Turks on the ships jump down into the boats to assist the others, and the work of slaughter is soon ended. All is now still. Those who are not dead lie severely wounded in the boats. The Turks return to their vessels, and the boulouk bashi orders the wounded to be brought on board.

The order is executed; the dead are left in the boats, and the wounded are carried on board.

They now lift up the wounded man who lies beside the dead bey, in the large boat in which they had first seen the capitan standing with the two beys.

"Bring him up the ladder," cries the boulouk bashi.

He is unconscious, and is bleeding from three wounds. But even in this condition he still grasps his dagger so firmly that it cannot be torn from his hand, and as the soldiers attempt it he awakens and opens his eyes.

"You are treacherous scoundrels, all of you! Osman Bey Bardissi declares you to be such."

The boulouk bashi starts as he hears this name, steps forward and gazes long and earnestly at the bey, whom he had once seen as a boy.

Must he meet him now in this condition? His gaze is fixed on him, and he tries to recognize in his features the boy of former days.

"You are scoundrels!" cries, for the second time, the proud chieftain. "Ye slaves of bloody tyranny—ye murderous, treacherous villains—shame and disgrace upon you all!

Before Allah's throne will I accuse you, ye treacherous, slavish Turks."

With cries of rage they throw themselves upon him to strangle him.

But an arm hurls them back with a giant's strength.

"Do you wish to murder those who can no longer defend themselves? Back! The life of the wounded, of the vanquished enemy, is sacred."

Bardissi, who has again fallen back exhausted, looks up in astonishment at the stranger who protected him, and was even angry with his own soldiers on his account. How comes it that this traitor's heart is touched?

Mohammed kneels down beside him.

"What is your name?" asks he, in low tones.

"Osman Bey Bardissi," replied the wounded man, and now, exhausted as he was from loss of blood, a proud smile flittered over his handsome countenance. "Not knowing me, you must be a stranger in Egypt," added he.

"Yes, I am a stranger in Egypt, and this accounts for my not knowing you. Yet, it seems to me that we once met; were you not once on the shores of the bay of Sta. Marmora?"

"Yes, I was once there!"

"Do you recollect meeting a boy there? You spoke to him of your proud future."

"I remember," murmured the bey.

"And you spoke proud, contemptuous words to this boy. Do you still remember his name?"

"I do; he was called Mohammed Ali, and I told him my name, Osman Bey. Were you the boy?"

"I was, and there we first met, and now we meet again. I regret, Osman Bey, that we meet as enemies."

Osman Bey Bardissi shook his head slowly. "We were enemies, Mohammed Ali; yet, if Allah permits me to live, you shall soon learn that you have found a friend. I well know that I owe you my life, and I shall be grateful while life lasts."

He ceased speaking, and again lost consciousness.

Mohammed beckoned to one of the soldiers to approach. "Carry this man to my cabin, and let no one dare to touch him with a rude hand. He is my prisoner."

CHAPTER VII.

RESTITUTION.

"OUR Mamelukes have been treacherously slaughtered, murdered! They have been lured out upon the water near Aboukir in their boats, and then fired upon by murderous huntsmen as though they were a flock of pigeons. If you are an honest and brave man, general, proved by mercifully espousing the cause of those who were lured to destruction in your name—yes, in your name, General Hutchinson—yes, it devolves upon you, and your honor requires that you compel them, to yield up the wounded and the dead."

Thus lamented Sitta Nefysseh as she knelt before General Hutchinson, her arms extended in wild entreaty. She had come over to Alexandria from Aboukir, and she it was who first brought the intelligence of the fearful event that had occurred, who first announced to the English general that the beys had fallen victims to infamous treachery.

The general, incensed at this shameful abuse of confidence, immediately dispatched two of his adjutants to the capitan pacha, to demand an explanation and call him to account for the outrage.

The pacha was, however, not to be found. "They did not know where he had gone," was the reply; "but Lord Hutchinson's message should be conveyed to him as soon as possible, and he would certainly send some one to the general who would give satisfactory explanations of the affair."

Soon afterward a boat came to shore, and the boulouk bashi, Mohammed Ali, demanded, in the name of the capitan pacha, to be conducted to the presence of the English general. With an air of profound deference and humility, he delivered the message of the capitan pacha, and expressed his own regret of the fearful event that had occurred.

"It was a misunderstanding. I myself was to blame for it, and bow in humility before your just anger! The capitan pacha had commanded me to arrest the rebellious Mameluke beys, and bring them on board the admiral's ship, in order that they might be conveyed to Stamboul. His orders were, that no resistance should be tolerated, and that severe measures should be adopted at the first manifestation of violence on their part. Sir, such manifestations were not wanting, and I had no sooner come near the boats which contained the rebellious Mameluke beys, when they grasped their arms, and threatened us with wild gestures. We fought for life, general, not knowing that our lives were, in your estimation, as nothing to those mighty, renowned Mameluke beys. We fought for our lives, as they did theirs ; and, if the Mamelukes were vanquished in this conflict, it was, it seems to me, Allah's will. Yet, I beg pardon for what has happened, and repeat, in the name of the capitan pacha, it was a misunderstanding—oh, sir, a deplorable misunderstanding ! "

The general shrugged his shoulders, and glanced angrily at the quiet, defiant countenance of the young officer.

" A very welcome misunderstanding it seems to have been to all of you. A misunderstanding you call it ; and did you not know that I, Lord Hutchinson, had pledged my word to the Mameluke beys that their lives should not be endangered ? Did you not know that they had come to me to inquire whether they could safely trust the Turks, and that I, in my blindness, had said to them : ' You can safely trust them ; they are men of honor, and they have solemnly pledged their word for your security ? ' You have broken the holy law of your prophet, of hospitality, and have betrayed those to whom you had extended the hand of friendship."

" Not so, general, by Allah ! Of such a crime I could not be guilty," replied Mohammed, quietly. " I broke no bread, and exchanged no vows of friendship, with the Mamelukes. I have only just arrived from a distant land, and know nothing of your enmities or friendships. My orders were, to arrest the Mamelukes, and bring them fettered to the admiral's ship. If I misunderstood the order, I was wrong, but no such crime burdens my soul, and I cannot be justly accused of broken faith or treachery. I have nothing more to say. I submit humbly to your displeasure, and can only repeat that I deplore the misunderstanding."

" Your quiet, defiant bearing is, it seems to me, inconsistent with your words. I deplore this treachery, and deplore it doubly, because my assurances lulled the beys into a sense of security. But I tell you I will have justice, satisfaction for this outrage ; I will call you all to account. Go to your master and say to him, in my name, that his treatment of the Mameluke beys has been treacherous."

"Pardon me," replied the boulouk bashi, composedly, "but perhaps your excellency does not know what commands respecting these Mameluke beys were given the capitan pacha by his master, by the Sublime Porte."

"I read in your countenance what the sultan's intentions and commands were, and see it in what has occurred. It is his purpose to destroy the Mamelukes, whom he has entrapped with flattering words and loving promises. But it shall not be done while I am here. I demand justice and satisfaction for myself. Let the world pronounce you Turks liars and traitors, but the same shall not be said of me and my people! I have pledged my word and the honor of England for the safety of the Mamelukes, and, though I cannot recall the dead to life, I will at least care for the living. Go to your master and tell him this : 'Lord Hutchinson demands that all the captured Mameluke beys be immediately brought to the shore and placed under his protection. Lord Hutchinson insists that they be at once set at liberty, and that they shall not be regarded as prisoners of the grand-sultan.'"

"Excellency, it will be very difficult to comply with your demands," replied Mohammed. "An alternative has just been offered the prisoners. I was present, and can vouch for it—they were to choose between death by the sword and submission. Not one of the beys, however, chose to die rather than submit. They swore on the holy Koran that they would remain the prisoners of the Turks, and make no effort to have themselves demanded back by the English, and, as they have nevertheless done so, and sent to you, they have broken their holy oath."

"They have not done so," replied Lord Hutchinson. "I heard of this infamous treachery by other means ; others informed me of what has occurred. I am, therefore, entirely justified in making my demand ; moreover, the oath obtained from them by the threat of death is valueless. I insist that the Mamelukes who are still alive be delivered over to me, and the dead also, in order that I may count them and assure myself that none have been kept back as prisoners. Go, and tell your master this, and say to him that a refusal on his part will be equivalent to a declaration of war by England. My ships lie at anchor in the harbor of Alexandria awaiting his decision, and they are ready for war. Tell this to the capitan pacha."

With a respectful inclination of the head Mohammed withdrew, and, returning to his boat, was rapidly conveyed on board the admiral's ship, where the capitan pacha awaited him.

The latter listened attentively to the report of the boulouk bashi, and inclined his head graciously when told that he had taken the sole responsibility upon himself, and had attributed the much-to-be-regretted-occurrence to a misunderstanding.

"You did well," said the capitan pacha. "Why should we not appear to regret this deed of bloodshed, now that it is accomplished? Why not deplore that which is irrevocable? Death holds fast to its victims. The living, we must, however, deliver over to the stormy Englishman, as I have no desire to take upon myself the responsibility of a war with England. Moreover, I shall be well pleased to leave this place. My work is done. Let the newly appointed viceroy see what he can do with these Mamelukes. Egypt is dripping with blood, and the atmosphere of this land is freighted with the scent of corpses. I can no longer endure it, and am about to return to beautiful, sunny Stamboul. Let my last deed be to comply with the demand of this haughty Englishman. Have the wounded put into the boats, Bim Bashi Mohammed Ali; you understand me—I call you bim bashi. You may inform your friend, Bim Bashi Osman, that his request is granted; you will take his place, and it rests with you to make it the stepping-stone to future greatness. I believe such will be the case, for I can read your soul in your eyes; and this one thing, it seems to me, you still have to learn: to keep your eyes from betraying your thoughts. Remember that this is essential to success. And now, you may have the prisoners conveyed to the shore. Lord Hutchinson shall count the living, and the dead, too ; not one of his favorites shall be withheld ! When this is done, bim bashi, return to the ship on which you came. Are the soldiers disembarked ?"

"Yes, excellency, and already, I believe, on the march to Cairo."

"It is well," said the pacha ; "let them figure at the grand entrance of the viceroy into Cairo. I will intrust you with a message to his highness, and will recommend you to him as a useful man. Cousrouf Pacha has need of such men."

Mohammed started at the mention of this name, but quickly recovered his composure, and bowed his head in gratitude.

"You make me happy, indeed ! You will send me to Cousrouf Pacha. I thank you, for it has long been my most ardent wish to be in his service."

"It has long been your wish !" said the capitan pacha, in surprise. "I thought you had only been here a short time ?"

"True, excellency, yet I have heard much of the great Cousrouf Pacha in my distant home, and to serve him was my most ardent wish. I swear, capitan pacha, that I will serve him as my heart prompts."

"But then it depends on what your heart prompts," said the pacha, casting a long, searching glance at the pale countenance of the young bim bashi. "The tone in which you say this has a strange ring, and sounds almost like a threat ! Yet, deal with his highness, Cousrouf Pacha, as you think proper, and serve him as your heart prompts. I will recommend you to him. We are good friends, the viceroy and I, very good friends, and I have no doubt it will sadden him to see me escape out of this confusion, which will require bold and fearless management at his hands. I go to Stamboul, you go to Cousrouf Pacha to serve him—to serve him as your heart prompts, you say ?"

"Yes, excellency, as my heart prompts, in humility and devotion."

"Now you may go ; I will furnish you with a written testimonial, and warmly recommend you to the viceroy, as I have promised."

He dismissed the young bim bashi with a gracious inclination of the head, and the latter returned to his ship to see that the prisoners were conveyed to the shore. He walked beside Osman Bey Bardissi as he was being carried down on a stretcher to a boat, by four soldiers, speaking kind, consoling words to the wounded man, and expressing the hope that Allah, in his mercy, would soon restore him to health, as his injuries were light.

Bardissi gazed at him fixedly with his dark, glittering eyes. "And is it then really true, Mohammed Ali—are we to be conveyed to the shore and set at liberty ? Are we not to die ?"

"It is true. Lord Hutchinson demands that you be set at liberty. The capitan has consented, and you are now to be conveyed to the shore."

"Is it not a new trap set for us ? Will the bottom of our boats not open, and let us sink down into the sea ?"

"You are to be delivered up to the Englishman," replied Mohammed Ali, quietly.

"I do not trust the word of the capitan pacha," said Bardissi, shaking his head. "Give me your word, Mohammed Ali, that we shall be safely conveyed to the shore—I will believe you. Tell me, truly, shall we not be cast into the sea, or assassinated before we reach the land ?"

"No, Osman Bey Bardissi, no ! You will land safely, and if it be Allah's will, a day will come when Mohammed Ali will extend his hand to you and call you his friend. Who knows ? Allah's sun shines everywhere. Men call themselves friends to-day, who but yesterday were enemies ; and the friends of to-day may to-morrow be enemies. Allah's will alone decides our destiny !"

"To-day you call yourself my enemy," said Bardissi, "but I already call you my friend ! You have preserved my life, and, by Allah, Bardissi swears that you are henceforth his friend ! If you should ever need a friend, call Bardissi, the Mameluke bey, and he will hear your call wherever he may be, if not above with Allah. And now, farewell !"

"Farewell, and may Allah restore you to health!" said Mohammed, in a low voice. "I am thinking of the hour when we two foolish boys first met, and tried to outdo each other in vain and frivolous words. Men speak little, but think much, and prepare for the future. Allah's blessing attend you!"

Mohammed returned to the deck of the ship, and looked down at the boats that were now steering with their bleeding, groaning burden toward the shore. Lord Hutchinson, who had ordered everything to be held in readiness for immediate conflict should his demand not be complied with, stood on the shore with his staff, awaiting the arrival of the boats. His eyes filled with tears as he saw them approach. "Forgive me, poor, bleeding victims of treachery, for having allowed myself to be deceived by flatteries and promises!"

The wounded bowed their heads, and looked at him almost compassionately.

"It is well that there are men who can still be deceived, who still have faith in the word and honor of men. We will trust them no more, and will have vengeance for this deed of treachery, bloody vengeance on him who is about to enter our holy city as king. Our curse accompany him to the holy mosque, and, wherever he may go, may it rest beside him on his couch in the citadel! Cairo, the holy, the beloved, is ours. We will fight him who calls himself viceroy, and contend with him for every inch of land. And you, brave Englishmen, will help us in our struggle, will you not?"

Lord Hutchinson shook his head.

"No, Osman Bey Bardissi! God be praised, we are about to leave here! my king and my duty call me away, and I am pleased that it is so. Continue your conflict with the Turks, and I confess I wish you success in your struggle. I am glad that I shall no longer be compelled to breathe this air, polluted with treachery! Your rescue is my last act here. Now, let us go and see whether any of you are missing. They shall bring you all here; I swear it by my king; I will have you all, and not one shall be withheld!"

Three of the number who had gone out in the boats in the morning were missing.

"These three must be brought here!"

This was the import of Lord Hutchinson's message to the capitan pacha; and the latter, all complacency and obedience, now that the bloody work was done, sent out divers to look for the dead in the sea. They were recovered, and humbly deposited at the feet of the Englishman.

While Lord Hutchinson and Sitta Nefysseh returned with the wounded to Alexandria, where the wives of the disabled and dead Mamelukes were weeping and lamenting, Mohammed Ali returned to the ship. The soldiers were nearly all disembarked; silence reigned in the ship, and its blood-stained deck alone bore evidence of the murderous deed that had been done.

Mohammed caused these stains to be hastily removed; he well knew that these traces of bloody treachery would be viewed by the delicate and sensitive Osman with horror.

He then went down into the cabin to his friend. Osman received him with outstretched arms, gazing at him sadly but tenderly.

"I have done as you requested, Mohammed, and have not left my cabin, though alarmed by the cries and tumult above me. I knew my Mohammed had bloody work to do. I was sorry for you, and yet I knew that you could not prevent it."

"No, I could not prevent it," said Mohammed, gloomily; "and yet, Osman, my soul shudders when I think of it. I have received to-day the baptism of my new existence, and it is no longer the Mohammed you loved who stands before you. I have to-day been compelled to lend a helping hand to treachery, but it was Allah's will, and the soldier must obey his superior's commands. I obeyed, Osman, nothing more. The curse of this evil deed does not fall on me. Though my hand is blood-stained, it is yet innocent."

"You have undergone a fearful baptism," murmured Osman, shuddering. "I read it in your pale countenance, my Mohammed—a fearful baptism. You must, however, march on boldly in your career. Do you now understand why Osman was so anxious to accept the position of captain of the troops? Do you now understand why I took this step, and do you now comprehend my love and friendship, Mohammed?"

"I understand it all, and I bless you, my Osman, creator of my new existence! I thank you, Osman; and when after long years the fame of your Mohammed's deeds shall reach your ear, when my mother's dream is fulfilled, and I am crowned and seated on a throne that stands on the summit of a palace, then remember, my Osman, that you are the creator of my fortune, and that Mohammed Ali blesses his friend with every breath. I swear eternal love and friendship for you, my Osman, and I swear, too, that the thought of you shall make me mild and humane toward my enemies."

"Even when you stand before your enemy, Cousrouf Pacha, Mohammed?" asked Osman.

"Why do you name him at such a time?" murmured Mohammed, with a slight shudder. "Do you know that I am to be sent to him? The capitan pacha perhaps observed, by my manner and voice, that I also do not love Cousrouf Pacha, whom he hates; he warmly recommends me to him, and I am to go to him to serve him."

"And will you enter his service?" asked Osman.

"I will do so," replied Mohammed; "and I have sworn that I will serve the Viceroy of Egypt as my heart prompts."

Both were still for a while, and seemed disinclined to break the silence.

"You will serve him as your heart prompts," said Osman, in a low voice. "In this case, do you think Cousrouf Pacha will long remain great and mighty in Cairo?"

Mohammed smiled faintly.

"Osman, I am almost disposed to be afraid of you. Your question tells me that you read my most secret thoughts. Let your question remain unanswered for the present. I will communicate with you from time to time, Osman, and send you loving messages, you may rest assured. I have one request to make still: when you return home to Cavalla, greet the wife that you gave me, and also greet and kiss my children. And then, Osman, if you are able, go down to the cliffs, take up a stone from the shore and throw it into the sea, and when the circles form around the place where it went down, and the waves curl upon the shore, say this: 'Mohammed greets you, Masa, and he begins the work of holy vengeance! Rest quietly in your grave, Masa; Mohammed Ali is keeping watch for you and for himself; the work of vengeance is begun!'"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VICEROY OF EGYPT.

TO-DAY all Cairo is in a state of joyous excitement. The days of want and care have passed—who now remembers the terrors of yesterday? Who still remembers the days when the Frank ruled here, when the terrible general made the people bow their heads beneath the yoke? Yes, on this same square of the Esbekieh, have they lain in the dust before the mighty general who stood before them a giant, though small in stature. Who still thinks of the misery and disgrace of those days? Forgotten! all forgotten! Two years are a long period for the remembrance of a people; and two years have passed since Bonaparte departed, and more than a year has elapsed since the last of the Franks withdrew from Egypt.

"All hail the new viceroy sent us by our master in Stamboul! he will make us happy, and relieve us of the unending struggles of the Mameluke beys! Long live Cousrouf Pacha, our new viceroy!"

These cries rend the air as the surging crowds make their way toward Boulak, from which place Cousrouf Pacha is to make his grand entrance into the holy city. All the authorities have assembled there to participate in the celebration; there are the ulemas in their long caftans, and the sheiks in their green robes, the crescent embroidered on their turbans in token of their dignity; there are also the generals of the Turkish and English regiments, the latter only remaining in Cairo to take part in the festivities of the viceroy's entrance. And now the new ruler approaches in his splendor. The Nile, broad as it is at Boulak, is nevertheless covered with boats, in which the viceroy is approaching with his numerous and glittering suite. He stands on the deck of a large boat, surrounded by a group of distinguished Turks and Englishmen ; all the consuls of the friendly powers are with him, and this seems to the shouting populace a guarantee of returning peace.

The boat is brought alongside the bridge of boats that connects Boulak with the opposite shore. As Cousrouf Pacha now steps out upon the bridge covered with costly carpets and strewed with flowers, thousands of voices from both shores hail the viceroy as their deliverer with shouts of joy. The pacha bows a kindly greeting in every direction, and then casts a glance toward the horizon, where, in the purple distance, the pyramids stand out, sharply defined against the sky. He bows his head still more profoundly, and remembers that he is now the successor of the great Pharaohs who erected these monuments to themselves.

" I, too, will erect such a monument. After thousands of years the world shall still speak of me—of the Viceroy, perhaps of the King, of Egypt."

Such are his thoughts as he walks across the bridge to the carriage of state in which he is to make his entrance. The ulemas receive him. " Long live the ambassador of the prophet ! Long live the blessed of Allah ! " resound from the lips of the thousands assembled upon the shore and in the streets of the city.

How radiant is Cousrouf Pacha's countenance ! How little the viceroy of to-day resembles the exiled pacha of the past, during his weary sojourn in Cavalla, with nothing to enliven him but his little struggle with the boy Mohammed and his harem ! A land is now at his feet. Onward the procession moves through the crowds that throng the streets ; they have now turned into the Muskj Street—the beautiful street, the pride of the inhabitants, with its old-fashioned, lofty houses. Onward the procession moves toward the citadel. There, in the beautiful palace, will the viceroy be enthroned. " Long live our new ruler ! Long live our viceroy ! " These are the cries that greet him throughout his entire march to the citadel ; and these cries still rend the air long after Cousrouf Pacha has entered the palace, at whose gates he had been received by the grand dignitaries of the land. He greeted them all in brief but kindly terms, and then retired to the private apartments of his palace.

He now reclines on his cushions, thinking of his past and of his future. A glad smile lights up his countenance. The way was long and weary, but its obstacles have now been overcome. Once he was a slave, but he had sworn to struggle for a great aim. He has kept his oath. Here he is the first, the ruler. Who knows but he may yet completely cast off the burden of dependence, and become absolutely free? Every thing rests on the acquisition of good and faithful friends and servants, and he will acquire such. It is so easy for the great to acquire friends! Is not the capitan pacha his friend? Does he not owe all that he is to him? He has elevated him from the dust, and made him commander of the army with which he has come over from Turkey. Yes, he is a true and devoted friend, and he will easily find others. His power will become great—great as all Egypt. He rises, calls one of the Nubian slaves, and bids him show him the way to the walls of the citadel.

The slave opens a secret door that leads into a narrow passage and upon the outer wall of the citadel. Motioning to the slave to remain in the passage, Cousrouf steps out, and then stands still, astonished at the splendid spectacle that lies before him. Spread out at his feet lies the holy Mazr, with all its minarets and towers. Farther on lies a whole city of cupolas —these are the graves of the caliphs; they rear their heads proudly aloft in the sunlight, congratulating the new ruler on his magnificence; but also reminding him of the perishable nature of all earthly glory—the saying of a certain wise man: "Thou first and mightiest of mortals, be thankful that thou art alive!"

"I thank thee, Allah, that I am alive, and I bow down in humility before thee!" murmurs Cousrouf, reverently. He then again looks out with delight upon the landscape that lies before him. There, in a wide curve, winds the river Nile like a silver ribbon, innumerable decorated boats and barks dancing upon its surface. Here all is life and animation, beyond the Nile reigns a solemn stillness; for a certain distance from the river bank stand stately palm-trees, and then suddenly, sharply defined beside the green fields, begins the yellow sand. That is the desert—that is the mysterious theatre of so many adventures throughout the ages, the receptacle of so much hidden wealth, the great burying-ground of the unknown dead. There, on the horizon, where the yellow sand and the blue sky meet, stand the pyramids of Gheezeh, and farther on, in the purple distance, the pyramids of Sakkara.

"A world lies at my feet, and I am the ruler of this world. I have attained my aim," says he to himself. "All is fulfilled; but one thing is left to wish for. O Allah, grant me still many years in which to enjoy this magnificence!"

Once more he glances around at the beautiful landscape before him, and then, conducted by the slave, returns to his private apartments. He lies on his cushions, listening to the shouts of the delighted multitude without.

Suddenly the curtain that covers the doorway is noiselessly withdrawn, and a slave announces that a messenger from the capitan pacha, accompanied by a bim bashi, stands in the antechamber, awaiting his pleasure.

"What is the messenger's name?" asks Cousrouf, wearily.

"Hassan Aga, master, bim bashi of the capitan pacha."

"And his favorite," murmurs Cousrouf to himself. "Let Hassan Aga enter."

At the slave's call the messenger enters, bows his head to the ground, and hands his master's letter to the viceroy.

"Do you know its contents?" asks Cousrouf, slowly opening the letter.

"Yes, highness. It is a farewell letter from my master, who leaves to-morrow for Stamboul."

For an instant a smile glides over Cousrouf's countenance; but then it assumes a sad expression. "The capitan pacha is about to depart—to leave me."

"He wishes to leave to you alone the honor of having laid subjugated Egypt at the feet of his master the grand-sultan, in Stamboul. He has done what lay in his power. The most dangerous Mamelukes have fallen beneath his blows. Shall I narrate to your highness how it was done?"

Cousrouf signifies his assent. Hassan hastily relates the bloody story of the assassination of the Mamelukes in the roadstead of Aboukir, Cousrouf listening with the greatest attention. "The capitan pacha has erected a bloody but a great monument to himself," says he, when Hassan has finished his narrative. "Yet it is questionable whether I shall be benefited by it. It would, perhaps, have been wiser to reconcile ourselves with the Mamelukes, than to excite them to new anger."

"Highness, reconciliation with the Mamelukes is impossible," replies Hassan. "The capitan pacha, who has ever been faithful in your service, wishes to give you a final proof of his friendship."

"And in what does this proof consist?" asks Cousrouf.

"He sends your highness a hero who has the determination to do all things, and the capacity to do all he determines. He gave evidence of his courage and address at Aboukir. The capitan pacha can leave you no better token of his friendship than this young hero, who is entirely devoted to you. May I present this last best gift of the capitan pacha; may I present to your highness the young bim bashi?"

The pacha nods his assent, and Hassan noiselessly withdraws, returning in a few moments, accompanied by the young bim bashi, so warmly recommended to the viceroy. Cousrouf Pacha wearily raises his head and casts a glance of indifference at the tall figure of the bim bashi; but as his glance falls on the young man's countenance, he starts. It seems to him that he has seen those eagle eyes before. He hastily casts his eyes down, and then looks up again at the bim bashi, who holds his head proudly erect, awaiting the viceroy's address.

"What is your name, bim bashi? Where do you come from?" asks Cousrouf, after a long pause.

The bim bashi advances a step, and, looking steadily in the viceroy's countenance, bows profoundly. "My name is Mohammed Ali, and I come from Cavalla."

"Cavalla!" repeats Cousrouf, with a start. Now he remembers that he has sometimes seen these eyes before him in sleepless nights. They have impressed themselves deeply into his heart with their fearful glances. The haughty pacha had never reproached himself for killing the slave Masa—that was his right; he acted according to law when he punished the runaway slave by death—but it was cruel to compel the man who loved her to witness her death. Cousrouf had felt this at the time, and that was why these eyes had penetrated his heart like daggers'-points. But that was long ago, and these eyes are now very different. They no longer glitter with curses; they now sparkle with animation, energy, and courage, only.

"You come from Cavalla," says he, after a pause, "and your name is Mohammed Ali? It seems to me that once, when I sojourned for a time at Cavalla, I also knew a Mohammed Ali, a daring young lad, the friend of Osman, with whose father I resided; I had appointed Osman bim bashi of the soldiers he was to bring over to me, and I also permitted him to select young Mohammed Ali as his boulouk bashi. Yet Osman has not come, nor do you appear to be the Mohammed Ali I then knew."

"Pardon me, highness," said Mohammed Ali, with a slight smile, for he well understood the secret meaning of this question—"pardon me, highness, I am this Mohammed, and yet another. The first was a bold, insolent lad, who dared to defy your authority and refused to bow his head in humility before your highness. He who now stands before you, however, is your devoted servant, who brings you greetings from his friend Osman. He is deeply touched by your graciousness, and, hoping for a continuance of your favor, he undertook to do your bidding. But alas! the will of man is often frustrated by bodily weakness. It was thus with my friend Osman. The first day of the conflict at Aboukir prostrated him so completely that he was compelled to return home to Cavalla, and the capitan graciously granted his request and placed me in his position. Yet I lay my new dignity at your feet; all that I am I wish to receive at your hands."

Cousrouf had regarded him fixedly while he spoke, and had listened attentively to his words and voice. He was satisfied with him. "Yes, Mohammed, you are right," said Cousrouf; "there is nothing of the fierce boy of those days in you now. You voice is flattering, and your words well chosen and devoted, and Cousrouf will attach you to himself through gratitude. He will cherish you, and make of you a devoted servant. You say, you lay your dignity of bim bashi at my feet?"

"Yes, highness, I lay all at your feet; and all that I am I wish to receive at your hands."

"Well, then, if your destiny rests with me, I must promote the bim bashi to a higher dignity. From this moment the bim bashi is the *sarechsme*, the general of the Albanian troops. You are their countryman, and you shall be their leader."

"O highness, how great is your generosity!" exclaims Mohammed, his countenance beaming with joy.

Cousrouf had observed him closely, and the young man's delight showed him that he had acquired in Mohammed a true and devoted friend, and he will have great need of such friends in the impending struggles to uphold his power, which the course pursued by his friend the capitan pacha will have made inevitable. The bloody massacre at Aboukir, which the capitan claims as a friendly service rendered him, has, he well knows, made him many passionate and irreconcilable enemies. Yes, he needs true friends, and Mohammed shall be chained to his service through gratitude.

Mohammed expresses his gratitude and devotion in such eloquent terms that Cousrouf's heart is touched, and he feels impelled to address some kindly words to the new sarechsme. He dismisses Hassan Aga with friendly greetings to the capitan pacha, and motioned to the sarechsme to remain. Cousrouf walks thoughtfully to and fro in the room for a time, his gold-embroidered caftan trailing on the carpet behind him, and the crescent on his turban glittering in the sunlight. Mohammed raises his eyes for an instant, and sees the figure sweep past him like a brilliant meteor. Quickly he casts down his eyes again, that his soul's inmost thoughts may not be betrayed, and least of all to the viceroy. No one but Allah hears the oath that now resounds in his soul, as he stands in an humble attitude at the door, waiting to be addressed. "I have sworn vengeance, and I will keep my oath. Vengeance for Masa; vengeance for the torments I have endured. My head is now bowed in humility before you, yet I swear to repay you for the evil you have done me; not by killing you, but by torturing your soul. We are alone, without witnesses; it were an easy thing to slay you. The door stands open, and I could flee before the deed could be known. But death is no revenge for years of torture. You shall live, and live in agony and pain. Thus will Mohammed Ali be avenged!"

In his heart he swears this oath. His lips do not quiver; no feature of his countenance betrays what is passing within. Cousrouf stands still before him, and lays his hand on Mohammed's shoulder. "Look at me, Mohammed!"

The latter looks up, and the eyes of both are firmly fixed on each other. The young general divines Cousrouf's thoughts, but the pacha does not divine Mohammed's.

"You said that the Mohammed of the days when I resided in Cavalla is dead. Is it true?"

"Yes, highness, it is true. He is dead, or he has at least transformed himself into a better man. Yet, highness, he suffered much before he could accomplish this transformation."

"That I can readily believe," says Cousrouf, in low tones. "I have often regretted having caused you this misery. Yet you must have become satisfied yourself, young man, that I could not do otherwise. I acted in accordance with the law."

"You only acted in accordance with the law," replies Mohammed, in a low voice. "The law ordains that the faithless runaway be punished, and also he with whom she has fled. The captured slave was killed, and it seems to me it was an act of clemency to permit him who loved her to witness her execution without being able to help her. Yes, an act of great clemency. You might have punished me more severely."

Again Cousrouf gazes into his countenance searchingly. The tone of his voice is mild and submissive, yet his words bear stings.

"I should think, Mohammed, that death itself were preferable to the punishment of being compelled to witness the execution of the beloved without being able to help her. In the years that have since passed, I have often thought that it was cruel, and wished I had not dealt so harshly with you. Does it suffice that I confess this to you? Will you say this to the other—the dead and transformed—and will it console him?"

"O master, what magnanimity!" exclaims Mohammed. "You are generous enough to confess that you feel regret at having done justice to that slave?"

"I was passionate, and you had excited my wrath," replies the pacha, gently inclining his head.

"Not I, highness," says Mohammed, smiling. "Not I, the sarechsme, but that wild, insolent boy, Mohammed, of whom no trace now remains. He is buried in the sea, at the place where the waves closed over Masa. Yet, if that Mohammed still lived and heard what you say, he would bow down in the dust before the great man who condescends to confess that he regrets what he has done. However, should I see that Mohammed, I will tell him of this never-to-be-forgotten magnanimity."

"I will give you a *souvenir* of this hour," says Cousrouf, gently. "I am so happy myself to-day that I desire to see the happy only about me. You are now a general. I should like to see you worthily fitted out for your new dignity. Have you a steed suitable to your rank?"

"I am poor, highness, and have nothing but the salary which your highness will bestow on me."

"Above all, you must have a good horse. I have received from the grand-sultan, in Stamboul, in honor of my entrance into Cairo, four beautiful horses. I make you a present of one of them. Go down to the stables; they shall be shown you, and you shall select the one that pleases you best. Be still! no word of thanks! Show your gratitude by serving me faithfully. Are you already provided with a dwelling?"

"No, highness. The bim bashi had but just arrived with Hassan Aga from Alexandria, and has as yet had no time to look after a dwelling."

"A house shall be prepared for you," said the pacha; "I will see to this myself. Remain in my palace to-day; to-morrow you shall have a house of your own. Now go and select the best of the horses. I hope you are a connoisseur, and will easily pick out the best one; it shall be delivered to you completely equipped." He calls a slave who stood waiting without, and commands him to conduct the sarechsme to the court-yard, and order the horses to be led before him.

Mohammed, his head bowed down in profound reverence, withdraws to the door, walking backward. Cousrouf follows him with his eyes until the door has closed behind him, and then a smile glides over his countenance.

"This man is won over to my interests. He is right; he is transformed, body and soul, and he is mine. And truly such a friend is a valuable possession."

Mohammed descends with the slave to the court-yard. The latter hastily summons the equerry, and delivers his master's message. The beautiful horses, with their splendid trappings, are now led before Mohammed. The new sarechsme selects the handsomest and best; he wishes to show the viceroy that he can judge of the beauty and fire of a horse. Mohammed then retires to the rooms set apart for him in a wing of the palace. When left alone, his grave countenance relaxes, and a triumphant smile plays about his lips.

"The work is begun," murmurs he to himself. "The viceroy has himself called his enemy to his side. He thinks, with his favor and flattery, to make me forget what I have endured. He shall learn that Mohammed Ali never forgives. You are lost, Cousrouf, for you slumber, while I watch and will take advantage of your slumber. Beware, Cousrouf, beware! I will not be your murderer, you shall live, but I will humble you; you shall sink down in the dust before me! Let that be the revenge for Masa, my white dove, and for myself!"

CHAPTER IX.

SITTA NEFYSSEH.

SHE was reposing in her garden-kiosk. She had ordered her female slaves to place themselves in the rear of some rose-bushes in the background, and make sweet harmony with their cymbals and clarinets. She wished to be left alone with her thoughts. She lay reclining at full length on her silver-embroidered silken cushions. The white silk dress, inworked with crimson roses, enfolded her closely, displaying the contour of her graceful form. The sunlight pierced the airy lattice-work of the kiosk, around which clustered roses and orange-blossoms, and shed a soft light over her charming countenance. The veil, which Sitta Nefysseh only wears when she goes into the streets or meets strangers in her house, is laid aside.

Beautiful is Sitta Nefysseh, more beautiful than a young girl, than the unblown rose, radiant with loveliness and dignity. "Queen of the Roses," thus is she called by all Cairo.

Who does not know her—who has not heard of her, of the Rose of Cairo, of the wife of the great Mourad Bey, the Mameluke chieftain? Even the Franks bowed humbly before her grace and dignity, and the scha-er sings and relates, on the street-corners, of the French general, Kléber, who loved Mourad's beautiful wife, and who often, in the stillness of the evening, haunted the vicinity of his palace, awaiting, perhaps, an opportunity to invade the harem in which the Rose of Cairo dwelt. And in his songs he also intimates that the dagger-stroke which lay the general low near the palace, was dealt at the instigation of the jealous bey.

Who does not know Sitta Nefysseh, the benefactress of the poor, the proud heroine who fought at her husband's side, who shared with Mourad the dangers of war, a heroine in battle, a gentle, modest woman in the harem?

All is still about her. The waters of the fountains near the kiosk murmur gently as they fall in the basins beneath, as if to lull the beautiful woman to rest with their music, and now the soft music from behind the rose-bushes is also wafted over to the kiosk.

The slaves accompany the instruments with their voices.

What are they singing? What song is this that exults and is yet filled with sadness? whose strains are so passionate, so lamenting, so longing?

Sitta Nefysseh well knows what they are; although the words are inaudible, yet she knows them, knows the sad love-song "of her whom he loved, of him who slew her." The song is a familiar one. But why does it excite such emotion in her heart, why do her large black eyes fill with tears? She would permit no one to see these tears, she would quickly brush them from her sparkling eyes with her hand, white as the lily, if the eye of any human being could now behold her.

But no one sees her—Sitta Nefysseh is alone.

At least she thinks so. The pair of black eyes that peer out from behind the shrubbery and flowers near the garden-wall, she does not see, and yet these eyes are fixed with such anguish and longing, with such passionate ardor, on the lovely woman who lies there dreamily on her cushions.

Of what is she dreaming? The slaves are singing of love and bliss; the waters murmuring of love and bliss, and, in the heart of the beautiful Sitta Nefysseh, there are also singing, sighing, and murmuring of love and bliss!

People say that Sitta Nefysseh is proud and has a cold heart. Love has never dared to approach her since the death of her husband, Mourad Bey. She is kindly in her manner toward all, yet no one dares suppose she views him with more favor than others. She keeps all men at a distance; they all love her and bow down in reverence and adoration before her, but Sitta Nefysseh remains proud and cold; she loves no one!

This the people say, and, if she heard it, she would nod her beautiful head, would smile and say: "They are right, I love no one. Mourad Bey, my husband and my hero, him I loved! Since he is dead, I am alone and love no one!"

The black eyes are still peering out through the shrubbery and flowers, fixed on her with passionate ardor. She does not see them; but now, as she raises her head as if to rise from her cushions, these eyes quickly disappear, and a tall, manly figure, stooping forward behind the trees and shrubbery, glides noiselessly along to the gate that leads into the inner courtyard. But, before he steps out, young Youssouf stands still, draws a long breath, and seems to summon all his resolution to his aid to resist the charm that carries him away.

"If she knew that I watched her, she would drive me from her, and then Youssouf would die. Alas! she may not dream that I love her; she is proud and unapproachable, and what am I to her? The poor *kachef* of her deceased husband! She tolerates me as she tolerates the dog that is accustomed to lie on the threshold of her door. Alas, I should die if she knew of Youssouf's love for her!"

Kachef Youssouf is handsome, and, were it not the noble Sitta Nefysseh, exception would be taken to a woman's having so handsome a kachef in her service. But Sitta Nefysseh is unapproachable, virtue attends her in all her ways, modesty and dignity are everywhere her companions. No one dares approach her chaste reputation with even a breath of reproach.

Youssouf steps into the inner court-yard ; he lays his hand on his brown beard and strokes its curly locks.

"Be a man," murmur his lips. "Be resolute. Alas! I could endure not being the one if no other dared approach her. But here comes one of them already. He can approach her and speak of love. Woe is me!"

With profound deference, and forcing his features into a smile, Youssouf approached Osman Bey Bardissi, who at this moment came into the court, mounted on his proud, splendidly-equipped steed, and followed by a body of his Mamelukes.

"Is your mistress at home?" asked Bardissi, springing lightly to the ground, and throwing the purple-silk reins to the Mameluke who hurried forward.

"Yes, Sitta Nefysseh is in the park. She is resting in the kiosk, and I will announce to the female slaves that Osman Bey Bardissi wishes to see their mistress."

"Do so, Kachef Youssouf," said Bardissi. "But first listen to me. How would you like to be taken into my service, kachef? you are too good for this life of inactivity? If you desire it, I will ask Sitta Nefysseh to give you your freedom?"

"Give me my freedom? I am free!" said Youssouf, regarding Bardissi with proud composure. "I was a Mameluke with Mourad, as you know. My noble master had purchased me; he loved me, and often told me I should remain with him while I lived. He made me kachef, first kachef of his house. I swore eternal fidelity to him and to his house, and I will keep my oath."

"I do not doubt it," replied Bardissi, in kindly tones; "I only mean, Youssouf, that you are too young not to wish to wield the sword and join us in the conflict that is soon to be renewed. Poor Youssouf, you will then be shut out from our ranks, for Sitta Nefysseh no longer sends her Mamelukes with us to battle; she now uses them for her service only, and I am certain she would be well pleased if her kachef Youssouf, as it becomes him, draws his sword to win laurels in the field. You can make something great of yourself. Look at me, Youssouf: I was what you are; like you a Mameluke, also like you a kachef, and could let my beard grow, and now I am a Mameluke bey, and three thousand servants follow me to battle. You might accomplish as much, Youssouf."

"I am satisfied with what I am, and ask for nothing more," replied the kachef. "I swore to Mourad Bey to serve him and his house my life long, and I will keep my oath: I therefore entreat you to say nothing to Sitta Nefysseh. She might be displeased."

"I will not," replied Bardissi; "remain true to your word. And now go and inquire whether your mistress can see me."

Youssouf hastened to where the slaves were still singing their melancholy song, and sent one of them down into the park to inform her that the Mameluke bey, Osman Bardissi, had come, and desired to see her.

The slave advanced timidly to the entrance of the kiosk, and announced the visitor to Sitta Nefysseh, who, awakening from a dream she had dreamed with open eyes, gently inclined her head.

"He is welcome. Conduct him to me.—Come nearer, ye slaves, and seat yourselves behind that clump of rose-bushes. You can sing and play while I am receiving my visitor, for Osman Bey loves music. Do me honor, my slaves, and sing the love-songs of Djumeil and his Lubna."

Bardissi cannot see these musicians as he advances toward the kiosk, conducted by the slave; he only hears and rejoices in their song.

Sitta Nefysseh has risen from her cushions, but she has not covered her face with the veil which, fastened to her hair with golden clasps, falls back over her shoulders. The widow, and above all the widow of the bey, is allowed to remain unveiled in the presence of a friend. The great prophet never commanded that the wives of Moslems should appear veiled in their own houses; the jealousy of their husbands had gradually imposed this burden upon them. Conscious of her own worth and dignity, Sitta Nefysseh feels herself free to disregard such requirement. She turns her lovely countenance with a gentle smile toward the advancing bey, and Bardissi feels the glance of her large eyes, though he does not see them. He feels it, and moves not, a slight tremor possessing itself of his entire being.

What! Bardissi trembles!—the hero, who amid the din of battle joyously confronts the death-dealing cannon, who never trembles, though face to face with a whole forest of spears—Bardissi trembles and turns pale!

Sitta Nefysseh sees it, and her smile brightens. "Why do you hesitate to approach, Osman? and what have you to say to me, friend of my husband, Mourad Bey?"

She wishes to remind him that he had been Mourad's friend. He well understands her meaning, and, stepping quickly forward, falls on his knee before her, and reverently kisses the hem of her dress.

"I paused, O Sitta, Rose of Cairo—I paused because I heard the song of the slaves—they are singing my favorite song."

"The song is known to you?" said Sitta Nefysseh.

"It is. Do you know, Sitta, when I first heard this song?"

"I do not," replied she, shaking her head gently.

"May I tell you?"

"Do so; seat yourself on the marble stool standing at the entrance of the kiosk, and tell me."

She falls back upon her cushion with the easy grace of a swan. But Bardissi does not take the seat so graciously assigned him. He steps forward and remains standing in front of Sitta Nefysseh, gazing down upon her with reverence and delight, as though his glances were a consecrated gold-inworked veil in which he wishes to envelop her lovely form, and draw her to his heart.

"Well, Osman Bey, when did you first hear this song?"

He remains silent for a moment; the bees are humming in the air, the fountains flashing, and from the distance the words of the song the slaves are singing are wafted over by the gentle breeze:

"Thee alone on earth have I loved. My longing heart is drawn to thee. And, though this earth were heaven, and it contained my Lubna not, I'd wander rather through the gates of hell if I but knew my Lubna there!"

"If I but knew my Lubna there!" repeated Osman Bey, in low, tremulous tones.—"You wish to know when I first heard this song? I will tell you. It was on the evening of a bloody day of battle; I had ridden at the side of our great chieftain, Mourad Bey. He called me his friend, his—"

"His favorite," said Sitta Nefysseh, interrupting him. "He said he loved you like a brother, and would confide to you without fear or hesitation all he loved best—his wife, his child—knowing that they would be guarded and held sacred as though they were in the holiest niche of the mosque. Yes, my noble husband loved you. And now, speak on. You had gone out to battle."

"Yes, it was a bloody day. The angel of death hovered over us, and the swords of the enemy swept heavily upon our ranks. A sabre-stroke dealt by Bashi Seref fell upon the sword-arm of my noble friend, striking him down and disabling him. The Turk was preparing to deal a second blow, when I struck him to the earth with my ataghan. I then bore my friend from the conflict to his tent, and there you were, Sitta Nefysseh. You received the hero from my arms, and for the first time I saw your unveiled countenance. I then returned to the battle, and took Mourad's place at the head of his Mamelukes. Whether it was anger over the wounding of my friend, or the bliss caused by the lovely image I had beheld, I know not, but my arm was strong and mighty, and love and heroism exulted in my heart. I called out to the Mamelukes, 'We must and will die or conquer!' But, being still too young to die, and loving life too well, we conquered. The enemy was driven from the field, and ours was the victory. We encamped on the field after the bloody conflict; and then, having won the victory, I felt privileged, when evening came, to repair to Mourad's tent to report our success.

"No one was there to announce me; I drew back the curtain and entered the first room. No one was there, and the curtain of the inner apartment of the tent was half drawn aside. I went no farther, knowing that the wounded Mourad lay there on his cushions, and that Sitta Nefysseh was with him. I knew this because I heard her singing; she sang her beloved to sleep as a mother lulls her babe to rest, or as the houris sing in paradise, when they in wondrous melody announce the joys of heaven to dying mortals.

"I remained standing in the tent and listened to your song, Sitta Nefysseh. You sang to your husband of love and happiness—sang in sweet words what Djumeil says to his Lubna: 'Nature breathes love. The bird in the air sings of love; the spring which bubbles at your feet murmurs of love; the rose that blossoms in the garden sheds love's fragrance—all is love and bliss. Woe to them who know nothing more of love, woe to them who bear a cold heart in their bosom.' This you sang, Sitta Nefysseh, and I stood listening, entranced. What I then felt was so all-absorbing, so divinely beautiful, that I was unwilling to have the harmony of that sweet moment broken in upon by the voice of man. I silently withdrew; your song informed me that Mourad slept and was in heavenly bliss. I noiselessly left the tent, and stepped out into the night. The moon shed its soft light around, enveloping the white tents scattered over the plain and the terrors of the day in a heavenly, silver veil.

"I did not return to my tent that night, however. Where was I? If you should ask, Sitta Nefysseh, I could not tell you. But this much I can tell you, I was in paradise! I thought of this when I just now heard your slaves sing the song I then heard for the first time, and that has resounded in my heart ever since. I covered it with thick veils, and laid my hand on it to silence it: and I found it possible to do so while my noble friend Mourad still lived. I forced my heart to bury in its depths its wishes and longings. I have been silent, Sitta Nefysseh, not only while Mourad lived, but I have also honored the period allotted to a widow's mourning. But this is now passed; pain has vanished from your heart, I trust. Your heavenly countenance is again radiant with youthful loveliness, and no longer shows the traces of sorrow."

"It is true, Osman Bey," said Nefysseh, with a low sigh; "time heals all wounds, and sorrow no longer darkens my soul; yet know that Mourad Bey still lives in my heart, and it is because he still lives for me that I am able to bear this life and this separation."

"I well know, O Sitta, your fidelity, your noble sentiments," replied Bardissi; "it is this knowledge that makes me adore and reverence you; and were it not strange if I, too, could ever forget the man who loved you so passionately, and whose memory you still love? But such love, Sitta, excites no jealousy, and even he who loves passionately respects such love. Listen to me, Sitta Nefysseh; hear why I have come to you; I can endure it no longer; the seal must at last fall from his lips, and Bardissi must give utterance to what he feels, to that which glows in his heart, and can no longer be repressed. Yes, Sitta Nefysseh, you must at last hear that I am dying for love, and that if you refuse to hear me, I must—"

"Silence!" exclaimed Nefysseh, interrupting him, with queenly composure, as she rose from her seat—"silence. Osman Bey! do you not know that my husband Mourad lived here in this garden, in this place? How could his wife, Sitta Nefysseh, have received you unveiled if her husband had not stood by her side? Do you not see him, Osman Bey? Do you not see his eyes fixed on you with an angry expression, and do not his lips ask his friend how he can betray friendship? What was your promise to Mourad? To honor and guard his wife while you lived."

"And I will, Sitta Nefysseh. I do guard and honor her, but I also love her as ardently as ever man loved woman!" exclaimed Bardissi, in passionate tones. "Does not man honor woman most when he loves her best? How can I better prove my adoration and reverence than by laying my life at your feet, and saying, in tones of humble entreaty, 'Sitta Nefysseh, be my wife, follow me to my house, and be mistress of myself and of all that I am?"

"Do not say this, Osman Bey, I entreat you, do not speak thus to me!" cried Sitta Nefysseh in a loud voice. "It would give pain to me to have to answer you, and it will be better not to have heard your words. I call you friend, and I wish you to remain my friend all your life long. Yet, hear me; my heart is open to no other love, and my hands must remain unfettered. Mourad's widow remains true to herself, and to him who dwells in her heart, and is ever at her side. Let us forget, Osman, what you, carried away by your friendship, have said. You thought Mourad's wife felt herself alone in the world, and, out of friendship for your deceased friend, you desired to offer her the support of your heroic hand. If ever I should need assistance, and a friend, rest assured, Osman, I shall call on you. But now, step back, one of my slaves is approaching with a message. Turn your countenance away, Osman, it looks so gloomy and passionate; I would not have her notice your love."

He turns aside, and seems to be listening to the distant singing and playing of the slaves; he, however, hears the slave, who now enters the kiosk, announce that L'Elfi Bey desires to see her mistress. He hears it, and shudders. L'Elfi Bey, his friend and companion-in-arms; what brings him here to Mourad's widow?

Sitta Nefysseh sends word that the bey is welcome, and the slave departs on her errand.

"L'Elfi Bey is permitted to come to you!"

"And why not?" asked she proudly. "Was not Osman Bey permitted to visit me, and was not L'Elfi also my husband's friend?"

"It is true; forgive my thoughtlessness," replied Osman in low and almost angry tones. "Permit me to take my leave, Sitta Nefysseh. I do not wish to disturb your interview with the great L'Elfi Bey."

"On the contrary, you will please remain," replied she, quietly, gracefully drawing her fragrant veil over her head, and covering her face.

Bardissi's heroic countenance became radiant with delight. She had received him unveiled, and now that L'Elfi comes she veils herself. Allah be praised, that is a favorable omen; a ray of light penetrating the gloom that enveloped his soul; he has seen her unveiled, and—

"L'Elfi Bey comes," said Sitta Nefysseh, rising to welcome her new visitor.

CHAPTER X.

L'ELFI BEY.

HAUGHTILY erect, the bey advanced, followed by four Mamelukes in rich, gold-embroidered garments, who bore a casket covered with a purple cloth, whose golden fringe hung down to the ground.

As L'Elfi came near, his countenance assumed a deferential appearance, and, his arms crossed on his breast, he stepped forward and bowed profoundly before Sitta Nefysseh.

"Queen of my heart, sun of my eyes! Allow me to do homage. and to lay my present at your feet as a token of my devotion!"

He beckoned to the Mamelukes to come forward and lay the casket down before her.

"I rejoice that you have come, L'Elfi," said Nefysseh, quietly. "I rejoice, because it proves that your wounds are now healed, as are those of Osman Bey. Yet, I see no necessity for such outward proofs of your friendship."

"O Sitta Nefysseh!" cried L'Elfi. "One brings his offerings to the good spirits, and, if I were a heathen, I would say, 'I lay on the altar of my goddess the tokens of my adoration, of my love!'"

"You are, however, no heathen, but a Moslem; and what becomes a heathen does not become the brave Mameluke L'Elfi Bey!"

"What I am elsewhere is forgotten," cried L'Elfi; "here I am nothing but your slave, nothing but a man who would gladly pluck the stars from heaven to lay them at your feet! Therefore allow me to do homage to my queen as my heart prompts!"

He drew the cloth from the casket, and golden dishes, goblets, and vases, glittered in the sunshine; and these vessels contained jewelry of varied design, set with precious stones that would have delighted the eyes of many.

Sitta Nefysseh regarded all this magnificence with an air of indifference.

"Accept the offering my adoration lays at your feet!" entreated L'Elfi. "You know I was with the British general in England, and, while there, I thought of you, and, before the ship left London, it was for days my sole occupation and endeavor to select beautiful things for you from among the articles displayed in the magnificent stores. I could not bring them with me, but they were sent after me, and have this day arrived. Pray accept them at the hands of your slave!"

"It seems to me that no one is privileged to offer Mourad Bey's widow presents of such value," said she, almost severely. "Yet," she continued in milder tones, "I will not humiliate him who was my husband's friend and companion. I will accept your gifts; they shall be placed in the saloon, and all the world shall see how L'Elfi Bey seeks to honor the widow of his former chieftain and friend. Thus will I accept your gifts, and give you thanks for them!—Come, Osman Bardissi!" she continued in louder tones, beckoning to the bey, who stood without in the shade of an oleander-tree—"come and see the magnificent presents which L'Elfi Bey has brought me from England!"

L'Elfi's countenance darkened, and he recoiled a step almost in anger. "What! Osman Bey is here?"

"And why not? He has recovered from the wounds received at Aboukir. Does it not become him to pay his respects to me? He has this privilege in common with yourself."

"True, my queen; pray forgive me for daring to find fault with your pleasure.—I greet you, Osman Bey Bardissi. I am glad to see you here! And now, I pray you, let me also see the gifts which you have brought the Rose of Cairo in token of your reverence and devotion. What becomes you, becomes me also; and, as Sitta Nefysseh has allowed you to see what I have brought, she will not refuse to permit me to see the offering of your devotion."

"You shall see it, L'Elfi Bey," said Osman, in a somewhat derisive tone. He stepped to the lattice-work of the kiosk, and, plucking the most beautiful crimson rose he could see, knelt down before Sitta Nefysseh and laid it at her feet. "This, Sitta, is my gift. I lay at your feet, the most beautiful of your sisters, your image!"

She smiled. "I thank you, Osman Bey, and gladly accept your offering, for Allah has created it."

He handed her the rose. She took it, held it to her face, and inhaled its fragrance. She then gracefully fell back on her cushion.

"Arise, Bardissi!" said she. "I have accepted the gifts of both of you; and, now that you are both the same in sentiment, but one thing is wanting."

"And what is this one thing still wanting?"

"Grasp each other's hands," said she, smiling. "I know that you have long been at enmity with each other; discord prevails in the land of my great beys. Let hatred now be set aside. You are both mighty and renowned, but your power will be much greater if you join hands. Let your followers see that you stand united against the common enemy. Oh, how can the fatherland be saved when its defenders are at enmity with each other! The enemy has grown stronger. You know that new troops have arrived here from Turkey, and a man is at their head, of whom I will announce to you that he is dangerous. Therefore grasp hands, and let me see that you are friends!"

"Then let it be so," said Bardissi, after a pause. "See, Sitta Nefysseh, how great your power over me.—Here, L'Elfi, my hand! Let us unitedly face the enemy!"

L'Elfi slowly and hesitatingly laid his hand in that of Osman Bey. "I accept your hand, Osman, in token of our resolve to confront the enemy together. But, before I declare myself your friend, I must first know whether you are my rival or not."

Osman Bey quickly withdrew his hand. "A rival, L'Elfi! and with whom do you suppose me to be your rival?"

"With you, O Sitta Nefysseh!" said L'Elfi, falling on his knee before her. "With you, whom I adore as one adores the sun and the stars. For your love, I can tolerate no rival!—And now I beg you to withdraw, Osman Bey; I have that to say to Sitta Nefysseh which no other should hear."

Osman regarded him fiercely. "I should like to know if L'Elfi is privileged to advise or command Osman Bey Bardissi here, where it devolves upon Sitta Nefysseh alone to determine who shall go, and who remain."

"Then decide, O Sitta!" said L'Elfi.

"You shall both go; neither shall remain," replied she, sadly. "I see that you are still enemies. Oh, I tell you, you will reap a bitter harvest from this bitter seed. The struggle, in which you should present to the enemy a united front, already begins, and you are still at enmity. Therefore, I say to you, leave me, and return no more; while hatred exists between you, you shall never more come into my presence!'

"Forgiveness, forgiveness! Our hatred shall be forgotten!" exclaimed both, falling upon their knees before her.

"My only entreaty is this," cried L'Elfi. "Allow me a brief quarter of an hour. Was not Osman Bey honored with an audience alone, and would it not become you to show me the same favor?"

"He was the first who came," replied she, quickly, "and, therefore, was I alone with him. Had you accompanied him, you would have heard what he had to say, just as he shall hear what you have to say."

"Then let it be so; he shall hear!" exclaimed L'Elfi, springing to his feet. He first turned haughtily to Osman Bey, and then bowed profoundly before Sitta Nefysseh. "Let the whole world hear what L'Elfi has to say to the widow of his friend. He comes here to lay all he possesses at your feet. He desires to consecrate to you his life and heart's blood, and entreats the loveliest and noblest of women to hear his prayers. L'Elfi is free! No wife has ever stood at his side; he has no harem, as many others have. He has never, like others, reclined on soft cushions gazing at the dancing of the voluptuous almehs—has loved naught but his sword and ataghan; but his heart is now inclined in love and humility toward you, the only woman it owns as its mistress; and I now entreat you, O Sitta Nefysseh, queen of my heart, become also queen of my house and harem."

"As he entreats, so do I entreat also!" cried Osman Bey, in angry tones, thrusting L'Elfi aside, and falling on his knee before her. "Be mine, Nefysseh! True, I have loved others, and have also looked with pleasure at the dancing of the female slaves in the harem, yet I have hitherto adored no woman. Military glory, my adoration heretofore, grows pale when Sitta Nefysseh appears, and all else that I have loved and hoped for is as nothing in her presence. For your sake, I will sacrifice not only life, but renown. Command, and I will be your slave; at your feet will I lay my sword and dagger. With my head bowed down, and my beard shorn, will I follow you into the desert, blessing each day and hour in which I am permitted to look upon my queen. Now, O Sitta Nefysseh, you know what Osman Bey Bardissi feels, and that he can boast of a greater love than L'Elfi; he even offers to sacrifice renown for you! Decide whom you will bless, Nefysseh! One thing more I will say to you: if you select the hand of my rival, and command me to love him, I cannot promise to do so! Yet this I swear, that I will be contented with your choice, and that I will never seek to take or shorten his life. Consider, Nefysseh, that this is the most enormous sacrifice that Osman can make for the woman he loves: he promises not to kill him upon whom she bestows her hand."

"And you, L'Elfi," said Nefysseh, in a soft voice, "will you swear the same?"

"I will," cried L'Elfi. "I swear that I will do as Osman Bey has said—I will still detest my enemy, but I will not kill him whom you love. Now speak, Sitta Nefysseh, and decide between us!"

For a moment all were silent. The two beys awaited her decision with wildly-throbbing hearts. She was still silent, her large eyes turned toward heaven with a wondrous expression.

At this moment the song of the slaves, accompanied by the music of the clarinet and violin, again resounded from the midst of the oleander and rose-bushes. The voice of a slave arose, singing of a slave who loves his mistress, and dies because of her indifference. He has borne this bitter sorrow for long days and nights, and dares not tell the tale of his love. He bore it, and was blessed in being permitted to see her, but her heart was cold and knew no love for him. But greater unhappiness was in store for him. One day there came a proud and mighty bey, and succeeded in winning the love of his adored ; and Fate willed it that the poor, tortured slave should see her eyes fixed on the bey in a loving gaze, and he also saw him fall on his knees before his mistress and take her hand and carry it to his lips. Then the poor slave's heart broke, and, falling to the earth, he died, sighing, "I love thee!"

All three had listened to the sad air and words of the song. Sitta Nefysseh now turned to the beys.

"This song has no bearing upon you. You will never see Sitta Nefysseh give her love and hand to another! You who were my husband's friends I will ever consider my friends! But hear me : Mourad's widow will never marry again! As I knelt at the death-bed of my husband, bathing his wound with my tears, I swore that I would ever remain true to him I had loved so ardently my life long, and never become the wife of another. And now I ask, noble beys, can you desire Mourad's widow to perjure herself? I know you will say the heart knows no oaths, love cannot be restrained. That may be, but do not speak of it to me. You have come to ask with which of you I will share the remainder of my days ; I ask you, decide yourselves, can I break this solemn oath?"

The two beys bow their heads still deeper, and sigh profoundly.

"Decide!" repeated Sitta Nefysseh.

They raise their heads and gaze at her sadly. "No. Sitta Nefysseh! You may not break the oath to your husband, sworn in the name of Allah and the prophet! No, you can never bestow your hand upon another. Alas, that this is so! alas, that we must submit!"

"No, it is well that it is so!" said Sitta Nefysseh, with a soft smile. "Mourad's widow has the right to be the friend of both of you ; she may hold out her hands to you and say : 'Be my friends, my brothers, and, as you love me, also love one another.' For the second time I entreat you, grasp each other's hands and be friends. For both let there be one common enemy—the enemy who confronts you on the field of battle—the Turk! Grasp hands in love and friendship!"

The two beys grasped each other's hands firmly.

"Let it be as our friend and sister wishes; she shall see us united. Let there be for us but one common enemy—the Turk!"

"An enemy who grows stronger each day!" said Sitta Nefysseh. "We thought to have peace when the Franks should have left, but unfortunately it is not so. The Turks are resolved to subjugate us. I know they will not rest until they have overthrown and destroyed the haughty Mameluke beys! They are continually bringing new troops into the country, and their leader is a dangerous enemy, believe me!"

"For the second time you speak of this 'dangerous enemy.' Tell us, Sitta, who is he?"

"He it is," said she, in earnest tones, "who brought the letter to the capitan pacha at Aboukir; he it is who confronted you in that bloody struggle, and whose courage, boldness, and determination, captured the stronghold Rosetta. I have read the countenance of the sarechsme, and in his eye I have recognized the lion and the fox combined. Before him, I for the first time in my life experienced fear. Beware of him; if possible, make a friend of him, for the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, would prove a mighty ally!"

"I know him well," said Osman Bey, smiling. "I met him when a boy, and even then we confronted each other as enemies. A short time since I met him again, and he then protected me from the fury of his soldiers; and I am grateful. I will endeavor, Sitta, to win him over to our interests, as you suggest. If we succeed, and when this formidable enemy shall have become our ally, the Mameluke beys will have great cause to congratulate themselves, and thank Sitta Nefysseh again."

"The only proof of your gratitude that I ask is, that you stand united. Thank me by pronouncing my name when you stand side by side on the battle-field, from which you have driven the enemy!"

"We will do so. Your name will I pronounce when I go out to battle! And your name will my lips utter, O Sitta Nefysseh, when I sink down upon the bloody field!" Thus spoke both, and then bowed profoundly before Mourad's widow.

"And now you may go," said she, gently. "Walk arm-in-arm through the Muskj Street, that all the world may see that the two greatest Mameluke beys are friends. If these are united, then will the struggle soon terminate. Now go and show the people that you are friends."

"And if they express surprise at our friendship," cried Osman Bey, his eyes sparkling, "we will say Mourad's widow wills it so, and we humbly and cheerfully obey."

"Yes, we will say this," cried l'Elfi, joyously. "Mourad's widow commanded us to be united, and therefore are we united.—And now let us go, Osman Bey; it is, however, not necessary that we walk arm-in-arm here; only when we have passed the threshold of this house shall Osman give me his arm, that the world may see your influence over us."

Osman Bey walked rapidly down the avenue. L'Elfi followed him slowly and hesitatingly, looking back twice at Sitta Nefysseh. The latter waved her hand deprecatingly, and he then rapidly followed Osman.

Sitta Nefysseh sighed profoundly as the two disappeared through the gateway, falling back upon her cushions as if overwhelmed with grief. She heard nothing of the music, that still resounded from the rose-bushes; she heard only the secret and sacred voices which lamented in her soul, and she shuddered at what they said.

"No, no, it may not be," said she to herself. "I saved myself from their importunity by the falsehood of the oath. I never swore to my husband that Mourad's wife would become the wife of no other. It was not because an oath bound her that she rejected them; but because her heart so willed it. Not without love is Mourad's widow; but whom she loves no one must know, no one must even suspect."

She arose and threw back her veil to wipe away the tears that burned her eyes. Suddenly she trembled, a deep blush overspreading her countenance. She saw the young kachef

Youssouf coming up the walk. She saw his proud, erect figure, his countenance full of youthful freshness and nobility. She drew her veil more closely about her ; but the veil cannot hide the brightness of her eyes. They fairly sparkled as he advanced. He approached slowly. She seemed not to see him, leaned back on her cushions, raised the crimson rose to her face, and inhaled its fragrance. Kachef Youssouf, his arms folded on his breast, stood at the entrance of the kiosk.

"Sitta Nefysseh, mistress, you command to have your carriage ready, as you wished to drive out at this hour. It is ready, and I humbly ask if it is your pleasure to go now, and if I may have the honor of accompanying your suite, and riding at the side of your carriage ?"

Sitta Nefysseh, who was still inhaling the fragrance of the rose, slowly let fall her hand to her side, and the flower fell from her fingers to the ground.

"You are an attentive, punctual servant," said she. "I thank you ; I will drive out at once with two of my women; you may ride beside my carriage."

Sitta Nefysseh arose and left the kiosk. She passed close by him, and her white veil lightly touched Youssouf's shoulder. He stood as if touched by a magic wand and fixed to the spot. He could not follow his mistress, who walked proudly toward the place where the women awaited her. He followed her with his eyes, however, and saw how her long flowing garment adjusted itself to her lovely figure, and how her white veil fluttered about her noble head, enveloping it as with a delicate white cloud.

"Would that I were the wind that kisses your cheek !" murmured he, lost in contemplation of his idol. "Would I were the sand your foot blesses with its touch ! To die near you, beholding you in death, were heavenly bliss."

Sitta Nefysseh had disappeared behind the clump of bushes. Kachef Youssouf still stood before the kiosk. He listened. The music had ceased. He knew that his mistress was returning with her women to the house. He hastily glanced around the garden, fastening his large, black eyes, on every bush, as if expecting to find an enemy concealed there. No one is to be seen. Only Heaven and the bees in the air see Youssouf as he rushes into the kiosk, picks up the rose, presses it passionately to his lips, and then conceals it in his bosom.

CHAPTER XI.

THE COUNCIL OF WAR.

FROM the day of their first meeting, when Cousrouf Pacha appointed Mohammed Ali sarechsme, the new general had proved his bravery and his shrewdness in many a skirmish and battle with the Mamelukes. He had already captured from them two strongholds, and had returned victorious from every battle with them. Cousrouf praised his fortune at having such a general at his side. Mohammed Ali showed himself so zealous and devoted in his service that the viceroy listened to his advice only, and called him his favorite and confidant.

"Truly, I am a happy man," said Cousrouf to himself. "I am the ruler of a great kingdom. I have friends at my side in whom I can confide, and who will assist me in all my plans, executing all I determine. Who knows but that a great future still awaits me, and that the crown which now hangs suspended over my head may not one day adorn it in reality? Mohammed shall aid me. He is the bravest of the brave, and the wisest of the wise."

He walked to and fro in his room as he said this to himself, his countenance radiant with smiles.

"I will soon have my wives brought to me, and my daughters also. Who knows, perhaps it were well to chain the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, to my side with still closer bonds? Who knows? Sometimes a strange presentiment comes over me when I look at him. Mohammed's eyes sometimes glitter so strangely and angrily, but he is conscious of it at once, and then becomes more gentle and devoted than ever. There are times when I distrust him. It were perhaps well to fasten him to my side so firmly that he cannot free himself. Yes, I had best give him one of my daughters in marriage. He must be submissive and devoted to his father-in-law at all times," said he, in low tones. "Sometimes I think his smooth countenance conceals a gloomy soul, and that Mohammed Ali has not yet forgotten the evil done the young lad in Cavalla. But these are mere fancies. He has proved on every occasion that he no longer thinks of it. I will have him called and study his countenance while speaking with him."

He sent one of his slaves to request the sarechsme to come to him. After a few minutes Mohammed entered. He bowed profoundly before Cousrouf, and seemed delighted when invited to seat himself beside the pacha on the divan, and smoke the chibouque with him.

"Tell me, Mohammed, how old are you?" asked Cousrouf, after a pause, blowing clouds of smoke from his lips, and seeming to regard the general with kindly composure. "How old are you?"

"I hardly know, highness," replied Mohammed, smiling. "But let me count. I believe I was fifteen when, at Cavalla, I first had the happiness of meeting you, my distinguished master."

"Let us proceed with the calculation," said Cousrouf. "I remained three years in Cavalla. By Allah, they seemed to me to be three centuries! Yes, I remained there three years, and you were therefore eighteen when I left Cavalla?"

"Yes, eighteen years old; and a wild, reckless lad I was, too! Even now I beg your forgiveness for my conduct at that time," said Mohammed, humbly.

The viceroy bowed a gracious consent.

"Since then twelve years have passed, and you are therefore now thirty."

"You see, I am an old man! And when I look back at the past it seems to me I have lived an eternity. Yes, highness, I am an old man, and can hardly say that any wishes or aspirations now find a place in my bosom."

"Are you alone in the world?" asked Cousrouf. "Have you no family?"

A strange fire gleamed for an instant in Mohammed's eyes, and he compressed his lips firmly. How could he who had inflicted such intolerable anguish upon him, how could he question him as to his heart's history ? Woe to him for so doing ! for this, too, shall retribution be visited upon him !

"Yes, highness, I have a family. I have a wife and three sons at home in Cavalla."

"One wife only ?" said the pacha. "Are you contented with one wife ?"

"One is often too many," replied Mohammed. "But this does not apply to my wife. She is the niece of the tschorbadji, and devoted to me. I have no cause to complain of her."

"Is that all ?" asked the pacha, with an air of indifference. "You have nothing further to say of her ? Then you do not love her, I suppose ?"

"Highness, I believe love was torn from my heart in my youth."

"Everyone says that until he loves," replied Cousrouf, composedly blowing clouds of smoke from his mouth. "Yet, in my opinion, one is never too old to love ; the heart never grows old. Let me know it if you feel that another love can blossom in your heart, and that you wish, in addition to the wife you have long possessed—and I know that possession gives satiety—another, a young and beautiful wife. Perhaps I can find such a one for you. And I will do so, Mohammed, if you return victorious from the new campaign."

"A new campaign ? and against whom ?" was Mohammed's only response.

"Against whom ? Against the insolent Mameluke beys, of course. The time has come to dispose of them finally," said Cousrouf. "Listen, general. The grand-sultan, weary of these incessant struggles with the rebellious Mameluke beys, is resolved to bring them to a conclusion, and restore peace to the province of Egypt. You, however, have now been here long enough to know that peace in Egypt means death and destruction to the Mameluke beys."

"Yes, highness, peace in Egypt means death to the Mameluke beys !" replied Mohammed Ali. "Truly, while one of them survives, so long will his proud, ambitious heart prompt him to endeavor to reconquer the rule which he believes is predestined for the Mameluke beys by Allah and the prophet."

"They shall learn that Allah has doomed them to destruction!" cried Cousrouf, passionately. "All is arranged. To the Franks we are indebted for one thing, and that is for having fought these rebellious beys. Since the French expedition the number of the Mamelukes is diminished by at least one-half. In order to prevent them from recruiting their decimated ranks, the grand-sultan has issued a *firman* which prohibits further importation into Egypt of Circassian and Georgian slaves."

"And yet, as I have heard, they resort to other sources to refill their depleted ranks," said Mohammed, respectfully. "I am told that they recruit their forces with the inhabitants of the desert, with the children of Albania, and the tribe of Achmed Ali."

"They do, it is true. But the Arabs and Bedouins are poor substitutes for the Georgian and Circassian slaves. You cannot make lions of wild-cats, nor tigers of jackals. Moreover, discord has fallen out among the Mameluke beys themselves, since Mourad Bey fell. He was a great man and a hero! But since his death they have lacked a chieftain who could unite them; Tamboudji Bey was such a one for a brief season, but, as you know, he fell at Aboukir. Three others are now quarrelling over the succession. There is Osman Bey Bardissi; Ibrahim Bey, the old Mameluke chieftain; and finally, L'Elfi Bey, a *protégé* of the English, as Bardissi is of the French. These three are now at daggers'-ends as to who shall be the leader. We must, it seems to me, draw advantage from this quarrel. I know Bardissi and Ibrahim have again applied to France, and have sent ambassadors to the French general, Bonaparte, to solicit their aid against their own masters—against us, the Turks. L'Elfi Bey, however, has sought the intervention of England, and begged for assistance against us in that quarter. They well know that they are too weak to resist us alone. And therefore, it seems to me, we should avail ourselves of this favorable moment when they are awaiting foreign aid. They must be overwhelmed, never to rise again."

"How wise your words, highness! Overwhelmed they must be for all time, in order that you alone may rule, and that the sultan at Stamboul may look with admiration upon him who has restored to the old rulers of Egypt the power of former days. This great work is reserved for you, Cousrouf Pacha, and your most obedient and devoted servant, Mohammed Ali, will consider himself highly honored, if permitted to aid you in this great cause."

"I count on you," replied the pacha, inclining his head graciously. "I know your devotion and zeal in my service, and therefore do I advise with you in all my plans, and speak to you as to my other self. To proceed: The Mameluke beys who applied to England and France also addressed a letter to me at the same time. In this letter they request me to conclude with them an armistice of five months' duration, in order that they may address themselves to the sultan at Constantinople, to settle, with the assistance of the English and French ambassadors there, the terms of a final treaty of peace. What do you think our answer to the demand of these Mameluke beys should be, Mohammed? Shall we consent to this armistice? Give me your views without reserve. What is your opinion?"

"I think, highness, that it would be folly to grant this armistice. The Mamelukes would avail themselves of this interval to recruit their ranks, and would secretly import slaves. They are cunning, and many resources are open to them. They would make warriors of these slaves in five months, and they would then be the first to recommence the war!"

Cousrouf remained silent for a time. "You are a good general in the field, and a good adviser in the cabinet. I rejoice in your possession!" said he, with his most gracious manner. "Just as you think and say, have I determined, and I have informed these insolent beys that I will not grant them a respite of five months, nor of five weeks; no, not of five days. I, moreover, informed them that if they so ardently desired to have peace, and to enjoy peace, they should submit, and come to Cairo, and live here as Osman Bey Hassan does, who has hitherto also been a Mameluke chieftain. Further, I told them that I was ready to treat with them, and, in order to be rid of this continuous plundering and robbing, I offered to assign them the province of Esneh, in Upper Egypt, where they might indulge their propensities to their hearts' content. They, however, in their insolence, demanded that I should give them the whole province of Girgeh in addition. This I refused. And now, I think, we have had attempts enough at peace-making. I will draw the sword again, and my armies, snall take the field against these insolent rebels. Youssouf Bey, my lieutenant, leads the first column, and the second, my Mohammed Ali, the second you will lead !"

"I thank you, highness, and I promise to lead my soldiers to battle and victory, or to be brought back with the dead !"

"You will lead them to victory, and return a victor. My general, Taher Pacha, will unite his forces with yours and Youssouf Bey's. Taher Pacha is already on the march from Upper Egypt. And now, tell me, do you think our forces are strong enough to chastise and overthrow the Mameluke beys ?"

"In order to reply, I must first know the strength of all your forces combined." He spoke with downcast eyes, apparently all devotion, and only intent on his master's advantage. Cousrouf Pacha was far from suspecting with what feverish suspense the sarechsme awaited his reply.

"I will tell you, and you alone, Mohammed Ali," replied he, in subdued tones. "We have only sixteen or seventeen thousand soldiers, and it will be difficult to concentrate them at one point, as they are scattered throughout Middle and Upper Egypt. The nucleus of this army that is to be formed consists of the four thousand Albanians sent me by the capitan pacha, and these Albanians count double. They are strong and brave. To be sure they are also a little too wild and headstrong ; and, in addition, they are not Turks."

"O highness," said Mohammed, with a sigh, "if that is a fault, I must express my profound regret, as I unfortunately am not a Turk myself."

"And yet I confide in you," said Cousrouf, "as I know you are repairing the misfortune of your birth by your deeds. But I would never place the same reliance in the old troops of Albania ; and, therefore, I have formed a corps of Nubians, and selected a body-guard from the number of these black slaves, and upon them I can and do rely. They have become good soldiers ; I have taken a number of French soldiers into my service, and they have drilled my body-guard well. Yes, upon them I can rely. If traitors should come near me, they would slay them."

"How could traitors come near your highness ?" said Mohammed, with an air of dismay. "Who could dare to threaten Cousrouf Pacha, the kind and noble ruler, with treason ! No. You can sleep in peace. Treason must stand aloof from your great and sacred person."

The pacha shook his head. "The viceroy will not sleep in peace, Mohammed, until you can announce to him that the last Mameluke bey lies dead at your feet."

"I trust, highness, that I shall soon be able to make this announcement," said Mohammed, in kindly tones. "My most ardent desire is to march out to battle, and prove to my kind master that I am not only a good soldier, but also a true and devoted servant."

"Then march out to battle, Mohammed, and be mindful of what I before said. Cousrouf will, perhaps, be able to reward the victorious Mohammed with a beautiful young wife, with a rich dowry. Go ! Be mindful of this, and hold your troops in readiness to march. Taher Pacha will already have received my orders to join you ; and Youssouf Bey, my lieutenant, is also ready to take the field. You will follow him rapidly, and, united, you will give battle to the Mamelukes." He then dismissed Mohammed with a gracious salutation.

As the latter passes out through the antechamber, his head humbly bowed down, he whispers to himself : "The black body-guard would slay those who should threaten your life ! Cousrouf Pacha, I am glad you rely on your black body-guard !"

CHAPTER XII.

THE ABDUCTION.

OSMAN BEY BARDISSI was encamped on the plain of Damanhour with his Mamelukes, awaiting the arrival of L'Elfi Bey and his forces. Spies and scouts had announced that the Turkish army was advancing from Cairo in two columns, and that Taher Pacha was approaching from another direction—from Upper Egypt—at the head of seven thousand men.

Bardissi's countenance lighted up with joy when the Bedouin sheik Arnhyn brought this intelligence.

"The decisive moment, the day of battle is at hand. If we are victors, how Sitta Nefysseh will smile on us, how happy she will be!"

Yes, the decisive moment is at hand. Perhaps Nefysseh's cold heart will be touched, perhaps she will bestow upon the victor a glorious reward—herself.

But why does not L'Elfi come? Without him Bardissi cannot, he well knows, venture to give battle, for he, with his men and the Mamelukes of Elmar Bey, is too weak to engage an enemy of such superior strength.

"To be sure, the Turks are cowards," said Osman to himself; "and against the Turks every Mameluke counts for two. Yet, as the scouts announce, their forces are too strong for us. Youssouf Bey comes first at the head of three thousand Turks, and the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, follows him with five thousand men. In addition to these, Taher Pacha is also advancing with his forces; if they all unite, it is impossible that we should be victorious, and yet we must be victorious."

At last, intelligence is brought that L'Elfi Bey is advancing. He, however, brings but few of his warriors with him, and his countenance is sad and gloomy.

The beys, Osman at their head, gather around him, and impart to him the intelligence brought by the scouts with regard to the strength of the enemy.

"We should therefore advance against him as soon as possible, and vanquish one of his corps after the other before they have time to unite."

L'Elfi Bey shook his head. "We must wait, friends and companions in arms," said he. "I think it would be rash and unwise to meet the enemy, when his army is twice as strong as ours, and I came here to tell you this."

"Then, by Allah, it would have been better had you not come!" cried Bardissi, angrily. "Shall the Turks say of us that we, the brave and haughty Mamelukes, have fled at their approach?"

"Let them say what they please, Osman Bey Bardissi," responded L'Elfi Bey, throwing his head back proudly. "What care we? We do not flee, we only retreat. And our friends advise us to do this."

"Who are these friends?" asked Bardissi, angrily.

"The English, none of whom, as you know, have ever deceived us. They have informed me that the Turks are advancing in three columns, and have advised me not to attack them. They say it would be a great risk, and such a risk would not be advisable without a better prospect of success. But we could not hope for success, for, as you know yourselves, we are in want of arms and ammunition. If vanquished, we should also be massacred, and they would finish here at Damanhour the work they began at Aboukir. Can you desire that, ye beys?"

"We desire to conquer, and not to flee like cowards!" replied Bardissi, haughtily.

"The unwise general attacks incautiously, and when defeated is laughed at for his pains," replied L'Elfi. "The wise general yields to necessity, and awaits his opportunity."

"Then you can wait, L'Elfi!" cried Bardissi.

"I will wait, and have resolved to do so," said L'Elfi, gravely. "I came to warn you, and not to take part in this ridiculous expedition. But observe, Bardissi, I do not flee—I retreat. Woe to you if you do not follow my example; woe to you all if you let rashness instead of prudence prevail, and attack the Turks now! I repeat it, strong columns are advancing! First, Youssouf Bey; then the shrewd sarechsme—

you know, Bardissi, who told us to beware of him—the shrewd sarechsme, Mohammed Ali; and, finally, Taher Pacha, and woe to you if you venture to attack them!"

"Woe to him who sees and understands his enemy, and yet dare not attack him!" cried Bardissi.

L'Elfi seemed not to hear him. He beckoned to the Mamelukes who had come with him, greeted his friends with a proud inclination of the head, and galloped away.

At a short distance from the camp a small body of English horsemen awaited L'Elfi and his Mamelukes. With them the Mameluke chieftain rode off, riding day and night until they reached Tantah; there fresh horses awaited them, and thence they continued their journey until they reached Alexandria. Here L'Elfi Bey embarked with the Englishmen. For the second time he left Egypt. He wished to forget in a foreign land that Mourad's widow, the beautiful Sitta Nefysseh, had rejected him and his love. It was no consolation to him that Bardissi had suffered the same fate. Unrequited love causes bitter anguish. L'Elfi thought only of his heart's misery, and cared nothing for war and military renown. He will return home when his heart's anguish is stilled. Then L'Elfi Bey will draw his sword again to fight for victory and renown. Bardissi felt differently. If the former felt that it was necessary to go into solitude to heal his heart's wounds, the latter preferred to seek distraction in inflicting wounds on his enemies. "For every sigh that passes his lips he will make a Turk exhale his life's breath," so thinks Bardissi the brave.

Immediately after L'Elfi's departure, Bardissi called the kachefs of his Mamelukes, and those of Ibrahim Bey and Hassan Aga together, to hold a grand council of war on the plain of Damanhour.

"Do you wish to be cautious like L'Elfi? shall we retreat from the approaching enemy?" cries Osman Bey, the crown of bravery. "Speak, ye kachefs! We ask your advice, for not we alone, but you also, rush into danger. Our blood and yours is to be shed alike. Therefore, let us take counsel together. The enemy is very strong, as you know. He is approaching in three columns. I pray you to consider and determine quickly, as the danger increases with each minute. If the three columns unite, the danger is multiplied ; therefore, every thing depends on quick and resolute action. Youssouf Bey, Sheik Arnhyn informs us, is only two days' march distant—Mohammed Ali, three. It seems to me, our plan should be to march against Youssouf, and vanquish him before Mohammed Ali can join him ; we will then attack Mohammed Ali. Having vanquished both of them, I hardly think Taher Pacha will have any desire to sustain the third defeat. We will then turn our attention to Cairo, now stripped of soldiers."

The kachefs, who had listened to Bardissi's words with sparkling eyes, spoke as one man :

"We will not retreat from the enemy like L'Elfi ! Lead us against him ! We will vanquish him ! We are strong and courageous ! Our steeds will bear us upon them with the wings of the wind, and our swords, aided by those of the invisible hosts, will prove invincible. The time has at last come to let these Turks feel that we are heroes, and not cowards. Lead us against the enemy !"

"Then retire to rest early," cried Bardissi, his countenance radiant with joy. "Unsaddle your horses and let them rest, too. To-morrow at the break of day we mount, and fly with the wings of the wind to meet the enemy. Allah and his holy hosts are with us."

"Allah and his holy hosts are with us !" is the joyous cry repeated by the kachefs. Soon all is still in the camp of Damanhour. Men and horses are at rest.

Bey Bardissi alone has not yet retired. He calls the Bedouin sheik, Arnhyn, to his side. "You are brave and daring. I have work for you, for which you shall be richly rewarded. If we are victorious, you shall collect all the spoils you may desire from the field of battle, and no one shall hinder you. The steeds and saddles, and the arms and equipments of all the captured Turks, shall be yours. As you know, three other sheiks have already applied to me, and offered to assist with their camels and horses. You shall, however, have the spoils of the battle-field if you will perform the service I require of you."

"Give me your commands, master," said the Bedouin sheik, his eyes sparkling with delight. "If you do not require me to pluck the sun from heaven, or to lay the moon and stars at your feet, Sheik Arnhyn will execute your commands for so rich a reward. Ah ! how delighted my daughter Butheita will be when I bring her the beautiful horses, and glittering swords and daggers ! The child loves such things. She is not like other women, she is more like a man. How Butheita will rejoice over the arms !"

"Then make her rejoice, Arnhyn. And now hear how you can do so. You informed me that Youssouf and his forces were in advance of the others, and that Mohammed Ali followed him ?"

"Thus it is ; a day's march in advance. But Mohammed Ali, so everybody says, is a daring and untiring soldier. Who knows but he may march at night, too, and unite with Youssouf ?"

"You are right, Arnhyn," replied Bardissi, "and it is this that I wish to prevent. I wish, if possible, to avoid encountering Mohammed Ali. It is of this that I desire to speak with you. Come, let us withdraw a little farther from the tents and discuss this matter."

All is silent. The Mamelukes and kachefs lie sleeping beside their horses. No one hears what passes between the Mameluke bey, Osman Bardissi, and the Bedouin sheik, Arnhyn.

They speak in whispers ; no one sees Arnhyn display his white teeth in his delight, nor sees the glad smile that suddenly lights up his countenance.

"A splendid scheme, master. By Allah ! I would do it though you had not promised so rich a reward. I give you my word it shall be done as you direct. We will make Sarechsme Mohammed Ali harmless."

"You will start out at once ?" said Bardissi.

"Immediately, master, for I must soon return," replied Arnhyn. "By sunrise you will come up with Youssouf, and I must be there with my ravens to gather the spoils. I will now fly to my tent ; there near the Pyramids I shall meet my daughter Butheita, and she will arrange the rest.

You will find me at your tent by morning. If I am not there, Osman Bey Bardissi, you will know that the Bedouin sheik, Arnhyn, is no longer among the living, and that the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, has been too shrewd for him."

BOOK IV.

THE VICEROY.

CHAPTER I.

BUTHEITA.

On the green fields of Gheezeh, near the verge of the yellow desert, lies Mohammed Ali encamped with his forces. Five thousand brave soldiers, among them the Albanian corps, the best troops of the Turkish army, are under the command of the young sarechsme. In advance of him, Youssouf Bey is marching upon the Mamelukes with a corps of almost equal strength. According to the viceroy's instructions, Mohammed Ali is to wait and see if Youssouf Bey does not prove strong enough to vanquish the Mamelukes unaided ; if this should prove to be the case, it would not be advisable to lead a splendid army corps into battle unnecessarily.

Mohammed Ali, however, well understood the secret meaning of the viceroy's instructions. Youssouf Bey is his lieutenant, his favorite, and his master is desirous that he alone shall reap the golden fruit of victory. If he is defeated, Mohammed is to march to Youssouf's assistance with all possible speed. The latter is a day's march in advance, and when his messengers reach Mohammed it will already be too late ; the battle will have been lost and a new one will have to be fought with the elated victors. All this passes through Mohammed's mind as he sits there in the silence and solitude of the night. All are sleeping. The warriors lie scattered over the wide plain beside their horses, their hands on their swords. No tents have been pitched : what need of them, the night is warm, and on the morrow they are to be on the march again toward Damanhour ?

For the sarechsme alone a tent had been pitched, which could be seen from far out on the desert on whose verge it stood. Any one bringing him a message would have found the white tent, surmounted by a dark-red flag, without any difficulty. As was customary, two sentinels stood in front of the general's tent. When all had gone to rest, Mohammed stepped out of his tent, and told the sentinels to lie down and go to sleep. What need of guards here in the midst of his faithful warriors? Let them all rest, for the morrow may be a day of great toil and fatigue. The sentinels thanked the sarechsme, and then lay down to sleep, their muskets at their side.

Mohammed returned to his tent, lay down on his mat, and, supporting his head on his hand was soon absorbed in thought. He lay there gazing out into the night, considering the viceroy's plans, and also considering whether it would be advisable to obey his instructions.

Youssouf Bey is to have all the glory of victory, but Mohammed is to share defeat with him. If Youssouf Bey is victorious, Mohammed must return to Cairo with his troops, and the former will have reaped all the honors of the campaign. But if Youssouf Bey is defeated, Mohammed will have to march to his assistance with all possible speed, and will, nevertheless, arrive too late, when the battle is already lost. Then a new battle will have to be fought, and the Mamelukes, elated with their success, will hurl themselves upon his forces, and probably rout them. Victory would then be merely possible at best, and shall he rely on this possibility? It is to be his first great battle, and dare he allow it to be a defeat?

But what can he do?

He considers this, and his present relations with the viceroy. Has the time come when he can lay hands to his task with ruder touch; will it do to substitute stern words for soft flattery? He will not be able to decide until after this battle—that is, if he is to take part in it at all.

While he lies there absorbed in thought, all has become still without. The men are asleep; no one moves, no eye is open. No one sees a dark shadow flitting across the desert toward the tents. Now it halts near that of the sarechsme.

A smaller shadow separates from the larger one ; it stoops low, and glides along slowly and cautiously.

All are wrapped in slumber. The shadow stops before the tent ; and now something glitters, like two sparkling stars fallen from heaven.

Perhaps they are the eyes of some savage beast prowling near the camp in search of prey.

No one sees these eyes. They are not the eyes of an animal, but of a human being who now stands upright in front of Mohammed's tent.

Sleep has waved its black pinions over Mohammed, as he lies there lost in thought ; his senses have become gradually confused, and he, too, now sleeps, dreaming of the viceroy, of the morrow, and of the Mameluke bey Bardissi, whom he would so gladly call his friend.

For a moment he opens his eyes ; it seems to him that he hears a noise, a slight rustling against the canvas of the tent. Yet he sees nothing, and all is still. It is only a dream. He closes his eyes, the angel of sleep fans his brow, and his head sinks back upon the mat again.

It would have been well had the sentinels stood guard. They would not have allowed this black figure to spring into the tent with the bound of a tiger, and then glide like the noiseless serpent to the mat where Mohammed slept. They could have prevented this spectre from so quickly and noiselessly binding his feet and hands with thin ropes that he did not awake, and then suddenly and rapidly enveloping his head with a thick cloth, and adroitly tying it in a knot.

The sarechsme, now aroused, raises his head to hear the words : "Fear not, your life will be spared !" murmured in his ear.

And, while these words are being whispered, he feels the cloth about his head, and that he can utter no cry or word ; he also becomes aware that his hands and feet are securely bound.

"And to this I have come !" thinks he. "Thus am I to die, an object of ridicule to the world and to myself !"

And, strange to say, his thoughts suddenly revert to the past. Thus bound and gagged, had he once lain in another place. And he who perpetrated the horrible outrage, lives in splendor, and Mohammed has lived in vain, and must die unavenged! It is again Cousrouf Pacha who causes him to be bound and borne out. "Whither? whither? I ask! Do I not already know? Out to the Nile that glittered in the sunlight before me a few hours since. Oh, had I but known that it was to be my grave, and that Cousrouf had read and understood my thoughts! He felt that it was he or I, that one must go down; and now he stands secure on the heights, and I must sink down, down!"

Such are the thoughts that harrow his soul as he is lifted up by two strong arms and borne out into the night. He feels the quick breathing of him in whose arms he is borne; he is no light burden even for Sheik Arnhyn's strong arms.

"How heavy you are, sarechsme!" murmurs he, smiling. "How light the viceroy's army will be, when the heavy and distinguished sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, is wanting!"

All is still about them. Mohammed vainly endeavors to cry out, to release his hands; he is securely bound, and his lips can utter no word.

They stop at last, and Arnhyn speaks, but in such low tones that Mohammed can understand nothing. He only hears another voice replying. Then he is lifted high and deposited on a soft cushion.

"Now, Butheita," murmured the voice of him who had borne him from the tent, "ride on to the tent with him, and keep him securely until our master, Osman Bey Bardissi, comes to speak with him! Guard him well, for you must know, my daughter, that, dearly as your father loves you, Butheita must die if he escapes. This, I swear, by Allah, so be on your guard, my daughter!"

"You can rely on me, Father Arnhyn," replied the soft voice of a woman. "I shall guard him as though he were my dearest treasure on earth; he shall not escape Butheita."

"Then farewell, my child! I must now hasten back, for to-morrow will be a day of battle. But I hope to bring you rich spoils in two days, and Osman Bey has promised to reward me well for my work. Hold him fast, Butheita; he is bound and gagged, and you have nothing to fear from him. Allah be with you, my child!"

And now they ride swiftly through the night. Whither? He knows not. He lies bound on a cushion, and only feels, by the movement of the animal, and by the shaking and jolting his body undergoes, that he is on the back of a dromedary. Sometimes, when, as it seems to him, he is on the point of being hurled from his high seat, he feels himself grasped and placed in an easier position on his cushion by two arms, and then on they move again at a swift trot. He feels that they are riding through the desert. The camel's feet sink deep into the sand, and then, when the ground beneath becomes firm, their speed is increased, and lessened when it again sinks into the sand. To Mohammed the ride seems to have lasted an eternity already. However, a few hours only have passed, when the dromedary halts, and a sweet voice whispers:

"I am sorry for you; it is horrible to be borne on through the night this way, bound and gagged, your face covered. I should like to relieve you by removing the cloth. But if you are cruel, you might tear my arm with your teeth."

Mohammed shakes his head slightly, and she feels the movement in her arm that encircles his head.

"You shake your head and promise not to do so, stranger, and I will trust you. I will free your head and lips, but I must first bind you to the saddle, to make sure of you." She unwinds the shawl from her delicate waist, slips it around his body, and binds him securely to the palanquin; she then unties the knot binding the cloth that envelops his head and passes over his mouth. The cloth falls down and Mohammed breathes freer and looks up. It is a clear, starry night, and Butheita's eyes are accustomed to darkness, and see as well at night as in the daytime. She gazes down upon his countenance, and a sunny smile illumines her features. He sees her not; his eyes are still blinded; neither can he speak yet, he can only breathe more freely, and he eagerly inhales the fresh night air.

"Handsome is the stranger," said she, in a voice of wondrous sweetness. "Already a sarechsme, and still so young! I supposed my father had brought me an old gray-beard, and it had distressed me to torment you so, and now I see a strong young hero, and I feel doubly distressed at your being the prisoner of a poor girl."

He looks up, and now he sees the fair face with its starlike eyes sparkling down upon him. The night is clear, and the yellow sand whirled aloft by the camel's feet imparts a golden lustre to the atmosphere; the appearance of the horizon also announces that the rosy dawn is about to contend with the starry night. Mohammed sees the lovely countenance with its brown tint, and its large black eyes and crimson lips, disclosing, as they now smile, her pearly teeth.

"Pity me not, Butheita," murmured he. "To be the prisoner of a man would put the sarechsme to shame; but to be the prisoner of a houri of paradise, who holds him in sweet captivity, is, it seems to me, an enviable lot."

"You speak prettily, O stranger," said she, her countenance beaming with delight. "Your words come like music from your lips; such sweet words I never heard before. You speak as the scha-er sings, whom I once heard when with my father in Tantah. Oh, speak on, sing on, for songs resound from your lips!"

"If my words are songs, yours are tones of the harp," murmured he. "Oh, tell me, Butheita, where are we going? Who has commanded you to bear me away thus?"

"Did you not hear? I obey the commands of my father, who is in Osman Bey's service. I do not know what they want of you, yet I believe they fear you, and wish to keep you from taking part in the great battle to-morrow. Yes, I know they fear you, for you are a hero. Now, I know how a hero must look, for you are a hero, and your eyes are as mighty as a host of armed warriors. Oh, now I understand why Osman Bey fears you, and why he offered my father so rich a reward to keep you from taking part in to-morrow's battle."

"That is it, that is then the reason I am led away captive," cried Mohammed, not in threatening or lamenting tones, but joyously, for he feels that Cousrouf has answered the question with which he had vainly tormented himself; he had hesitated, now he feels that he has advanced a step farther toward his aim. Now he knows what he has to do;

Fate has pointed out the road to his goal through Butheita, and he feels that she will lead him on until he reaches the throne seen by his mother in her dreams, and becomes the avenger of her he loved, of his Masa.

She still gazed upon the upturned countenance of her prisoner, now lighted up by the rosy light of the morning sun; she is struck with the tone of his voice, and is surprised to learn that the sarechsme is not dejected at his captivity.

"You rejoice," said she, smiling, and again displaying her beautiful teeth. "You rejoice over your captivity."

"I should like to be such a captive forever, Butheita; it is heavenly to be encircled in these fair arms."

"You are singing your sweet songs again, and oh, they sound so sweet!" said she. And yet, as he attempts to lay his head closer to her shoulder, she timidly recoils with an anxious look in her eyes.

"Not so, stranger. Honor the hospitality of my house, for my dromedary is my house, and I wish you to be my guest. And, that you may see that Butheita is sensible of the duties of a hostess, accept this banana and refresh yourself; you will need it."

She takes two bananas from the bag that hangs at the side of the saddle, and with delight Mohammed sees her peel the rich fruit, which she hands him with a delicious smile.

"Eat, stranger; eat, and refresh yourself."

She has forgotten that he is bound, and that he cannot take the fruit from her hand.

"This heavenly fruit must be administered by your fair hand alone," said he. "As my hands are bound, you must hold it to my lips yourself. Oh, that they were to be refreshed with yours instead of the banana!"

She smiles and looks down, blushingly. She then breaks the fruit and brings it to his lips in little morsels. And each time he raises his lips so high, that they touch not only the fruit but also her delicate brown fingers. It was sweet play, and Mohammed forgets all else. This night, minutes have been as hours to him, and now he would have them become eternities. Lovely is this child of the desert that bends down over him; a whole world of maidenly purity and sweetness and untamed nature sparkles down upon him from out those large, dark eyes. And so beautiful and innocent are those crimson lips ! Oh, that this minute could endure forever !

But time passes relentlessly over all that is most beautiful, and this blissful moment is at an end. Now that he has finished eating the fruit, Butheita remembers that her father's tent is yet far distant, and that she must arrive there soon after daybreak. She must have brought her prisoner to the tent before life shall have awakened on the desert. Some Bedouin might easily take from her or rescue her prisoner, and then her fate would be sealed, for the sheik will, she knows, keep his word. "Then onward, my dromedary, onward !" And now both are silent, playing and love-making are at an end, and onward they speed toward her father's tent. "Onward, my dromedary, ship of the desert, fly swiftly !" And, as if understanding her words, the animal increases its speed over the sand.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE DESERT.

THE ship of the desert is still flying over the plain. The sun has arisen, and throws across the sand the long shadow of the dromedary and of the two human heads. Butheita is seated on the palanquin, high up on the dromedary's back. She observes the long shadow and the two heads bobbing up and down, and a merry burst of laughter resounds from her lips.

"Look at these shadows ! Only look at them, stranger ; see, they are kissing each other in the sand !"

"And why the shadows only, Butheita ? I wish you would do as your shadow, and bend your head down a little closer."

"Oh, do not say such things !" said she, blushing and drawing her head still farther back. "I have promised my father never to allow a stranger to kiss me until he shall come who is to lead me to his tent as his wife. And this is why I am permitted to wander freely through the desert, and not cooped up in the second apartment of the tent, and not compelled to cover my face with a veil. However, when I ride with father to Tantah, then, O stranger, I dress myself up as the women of the cities do ! Then I wear a long silk dress and a splendid veil, and color my lips and hands with henna ! "

"That is to say, Butheita, you make of the houri of paradise an ordinary human being. I should not like to see you when you look like other women. You are the Queen of the Desert, Butheita."

" How do you know that ? So am I called by the Bedouins who are my father's subjects. Yes, they are very respectful to their sheik's daughter, and call me Queen of the Desert. They sometimes say," continued she, smiling : " 'Her countenance shines like the sun, enkindling in flames the hearts of all who approach her.' I, however, hold myself aloof from them, and do not listen to what they say, else my father would become angry, and would deprive me of my liberty to roam about as I please. And now you know all, stranger, and know why I may not kiss you, though I would gladly do something to please the poor prisoner ; but I have promised this to my father and to myself. Therefore, no more of this. Here we must halt. Look at the sublime image that stands there so grandly, and throws its black shadow far out over the yellow sand. That is the true Queen of the Desert. Let me turn the animal so that you can see our queen."

Mohammed looked up and bowed his head in awe before the monster image that stood before him. He saw a human face and a mighty figure towering before him in gigantic proportions. Yes, it was a human countenance ! From out those eyes, which seemed to compass a whole world within their deep hollows, the grandeur and sublimity of the human mind appeared to speak to him. What majestic thought was reflected in that massive forehead ? The eloquent mouth seemed to announce the grand mystery of the universe. The whole mighty countenance seemed to contain a heaven of sublime peace, and to be radiant with a happiness unknown to the human breast on earth, for man has suffered and suffers. Doubt, anxiety, care, and misery, have sojourned in every mortal breast; but this countenance, that towers like a mountain in its divine majesty, knows nothing of human doubt and suffering. Its face is radiant with divine, eternal tranquillity—with the peace of the universe.

"How grand, how sublime!" murmured Mohammed, gazing fixedly at the colossal image that has for thousands of years looked on man, and smiled on him from out the depths of its unfathomable eyes. The sphinx has looked calmly down upon generation after generation, upon men of every faith and religion, and has seen them pass away. Heathens have become Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and the latter in their turn have become converted to other faiths, and change upon change has taken place. The sphinx has looked down upon all this! itself divine, unchangeable in the midst of all that has passed and passes away.

"See," murmured Butheita, "this is the Queen of the Desert. She is the holy sphinx, before whom men and women have fallen in the dust for thousands of years, and before whom kings and emperors prostrate themselves to this day. Thus spoke the scha-er whom I heard when with my father in Tantah a short time since: 'He who approaches the protecting goddess of mankind must fall down in the dust before her, and worship Allah and the saints.'

"Kneel down, my dromedary, kneel down, my Alpha!" and she draws in her reins, repeating the words in imperious tones. The animal understands her, and sinks gravely upon its knees. Butheita bounds down from her seat with the lightness of the gazelle, and bows low before the sphinx, her arms crossed on her breast.

From the back of the dromedary, where he lies bound, her prisoner looks down with admiration upon the lovely girlish figure that skips lightly across the sand to the foot of the godlike figure. How small she appears beside the mighty image, like a flower blooming at its feet.

Butheita kneels down before the sphinx and murmurs a prayer for protection for herself and father, for the tent in which they dwell, for the dromedary, and for the goats; and finally also for the stranger whom she is about to lead to her tent. "Grant, O Allah, that I may be mild, and that he may not feel his fetters too severely ! And you, O holy goddess of the desert, grant that Butheita's heart may remain pure and strong, and that she may be enabled to keep the promise made to her father ! "

As she murmurs these words a slight tremor possessed itself of her delicate figure, and piously and timidly she looks up into the illimitable, unfathomable eyes of the sphinx, that gaze out upon the whole world. Then she rises and smilingly salutes once more with her little brown hand the Queen of the Desert, and, springing lightly upon the back of her dromedary, grasps the reins.

Butheita's countenance now wears a serious expression. It seems she has brought solemn thoughts with her from the goddess of the desert, and from time to time she casts a timid glance at the prisoner, who lies bound before her. The dromedary moves on at a uniform speed. Those it is bearing onward speak but litttle. Butheita's heart is oppressed; the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, is thoughtful and grave.

Once Butheita raises her arm and points to some towering objects defined sharply against the sky in the distance.

"See, stranger, see; those are the grand monuments of our kings, the Pharaohs, the pyramids, and there lies Sakkara, where the graves of the holy oxen are to be seen. We are almost at our journey's end. There lies the village of Petresin. Its inhabitants still sleep, and the doors of the huts are closed: they do not see us. That is well, that is necessary; my father said no one must know that we are taking you away a prisoner. Do you see that little spot on the verge of the desert ? That is my father's tent."

Butheita patted her dromedary on the neck with her little hand, urging it to greater speed. Like an arrow they flew across the sand until they had reached her father's tent. Butheita drew in her reins at the door and commanded the animal to kneel down.

"Stranger, we are at our journey's end! At the threshold of our tent, Butheita bids you welcome, blessed be your entrance into our house!"

She quickly loosens the shawl that binds him to the saddle, and before he is aware of what she is doing lifts him in her arms. Lightly, as though he were a plaything, she bears him into the inner apartment of the tent, where she smilingly deposits him on a mat.

"Blessed be your entrance into my tent! Now refresh yourself with repose after your long ride. I am going out to prepare your breakfast."

He follows Butheita with eager eyes, as she steps into the other apartment of the tent. Forgotten are all the schemes and thoughts that ordinarily occupy him day and night. Forgotten are the past and future; he now lives for the present only. May the sun mercifully stand still, and this hour prove an eternity! Why occupy himself with thoughts of the future, the present is so beautiful, so heavenly? Oh, that it could last forever! But no! a cloud passes over his brow; he remembers——

"No! Let the present pass rapidly," said he. "I am a prisoner, and how would my soldiers laugh to see the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, bound and a captive in the tent of a Bedouin chieftain!"

He knew that Butheita had remained in the other apartment and heard his words. She quickly went to him, profound sorrow depicted in her charming countenance.

"They would laugh at you, sarechsme? Oh, how sorry I should be to have them do so! True, it is unpleasant to be a prisoner. Yet, you must know that my father is highly esteemed; he is the first man of the village. O sarechsme, the Bedouins call him their father, their protector, and the Mamelukes are proud of his friendship; and it was out of love for them that he made you a prisoner. If you are unhappy, oh, forgive poor Butheita, who was compelled to obey her father's commands! Oh, do not be angry with her!"

"I am not angry with you," said he, gently. "Yet consider, is it not hard and shameful for me, a man and a soldier, to lie here bound hand and foot?"

Her countenance lighted up with joy. "Yes, I understand that," said she, thoughtfully. "It pains me to the soul, not to be able to lessen your misery, to improve your condition. Yet," she suddenly continued, "I can and I will relieve you."

"That you can, if you will," murmured he. "Seat yourself beside me, Butheita. Let me hear your voice. Tell me the sweet history of your heart. Remain with me till your father comes. While listening I shall forget all shame and disgrace, and rejoice only in your presence. It would seem as though a good spirit had led me into another world, where an angel was bowed down over me, to whom I looked up in sweet ecstasy!"

"No, it will only be a poor child of the desert, who sits beside you," said Butheita, smiling. "Only look at poor, miserable me. There is nothing beautiful or radiant about me, proud stranger! Let me go, you would die of hunger and thirst if I remained here, and it would be shameful, too, if I should neglect the duty of hospitality toward my guest. But I will tell you what I can and will do! You shall not lie there bound. I will not have it so, Mohammed Ali. Give me your sacred word that you will not leave, but will remain here until my father comes for you. Give me your word, and I will untie the cords that bind your hands and feet. Give me your word."

He looks at her in astonishment.

"Do you still have such faith in man's promises that you believe I would keep my word if I gave it?"

"Yes," said she, smiling; "I do; this would be a horrible world if one could not. My father has often said to me: 'When a man has given his word he keeps it, though the consequence should be death. Thus a truly brave man acts; only cowards break their word.'"

"Then you consider me a truly brave man, Butheita, and not a coward?"

"It is only necessary to look at you, stranger," said she, with a winning smile, "to feel in the depths of one's heart that you are a man, and no coward. Give me your word, and you are unfettered. Give me your word that you will not leave."

"Well," said he, gazing at her joyously, "I give you my word, as a man! I swear by Allah, and the prophet, and by my own honor, I will not leave here until your father comes and says that I may, and states the conditions. I will, if you will permit me, remain with you in the mean while, and do nothing but look at you. I will be your slave; drink the sweet dew from your lips, and read your commands in your eyes. Tell me, pearl of women, will you accept me as your slave?"

Without answering his question, she knelt down blushingly, and untied the cords that bound his hands and feet. "Now, stand up, a free man!"

He arose, and with a feeling of intense relief, stretched out the hands that ached from their long confinement, and extended his arms. He would gladly have clasped the girl in their embrace, but, with the grace and ease of a gazelle, she sprang back out of his reach to the door of the tent, and looked at him threateningly.

"Mohammed Ali, if you abuse your freedom, you are not the man I took you to be."

He bowed his head in silence. "You are right, Butheita, forgive me! I submit to the will of the desert queen; I am your slave, and await your commands; command me, and I will humbly obey."

He looked at her inquiringly. Butheita's large black eyes gazed at him with a soft expression, and again a tremor agitated her gentle being.

"I desire nothing more, sarechsme," said she, timidly, "than that you remain here in the rear apartment of the tent, and I beg you, should any one come, to remain here quietly; as it is that place generally reserved for women, no one will dare to enter it. I dwell in it alone, for my father is not fond of women! He says they are talkative and quarrelsome, vain and lazy, too, and he has had enough of them. Twelve wives has he brought to his tent, one after the other, but after a short time he sent every one of them home to her father. I am the daughter of his first wife, and my father loves me more than he has ever loved any of them; and he wants no woman in his tent but his Butheita. Nor do I wish to have any other woman here. I can attend to father's household affairs quite well, alone. I milk the goats, make the butter, and bake the bread. I also spin the wool of our black sheep, and still have plenty of time left to knit the shawls my father needs."

"So industrious, Butheita? Happy and enviable will the man be who shall some day lead your father's daughter to his home!"

"You need not envy him," said she, quickly, "there will be no such man. It is with me as with my father; he loves only me, and I only him. No man shall ever lead me to his tent as his wife!"

"Butheita will say that until she loves some man," replied Mohammed, looking deeply into her eyes. "Would Butheita one day follow me to my tent—me?"

She did not reply. She drew back in alarm, and again she blushed deeply, quite unlike a child of the desert, but after the fashion of a city girl, and drew aside the curtain that divided the tent.

"I am only going to prepare your breakfast."

He did as she had requested, and retired to the second apartment of the tent, to patiently await Butheita's return. There he sat absorbed in thought, seemingly forgetful that he was the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, and a captive, for a happy smile rested on his lips. His thoughts were beyond the sea, in the distant Cavalla. Whom did he see there? It seems to him that Masa stands before him with her large soft eyes, and sweet smile; and Masa's image is strangely interwoven with that of the Bedouin-child, Butheita. The two fair forms were blended, and it did not displease him. Yet another face is there. It regards him with a grave yet kindly expression. It is not the face of a young girl; sweet and youthful freshness and love are not in its features, and yet it is a loved face, that of his wife Ada, the mother of his children. No, he has not forgotten her! How could it be possible after living side by side in peace and harmony for almost ten years! How could it be possible to forget her who had given him three loved lives? Ah, his beloved boys, how his heart yearns after them! Yet his heart yearns for her too, for his wife.

For almost ten years this quiet-loving woman has sat by his side, and he will never put her away from him, never forget her, the mother of his children. Years pass rapidly, but a man's heart does not grow old. A man's heart is ever young, ever fresh for a new love, and every love seems to him to be the first.

If Butheita were not the daughter of a Bedouin chieftain, but a Georgian or Circassian slave, he would give for her all the riches he possesses ; the beautiful house and furniture given him by Cousrouf Pacha. He would make her his wife, cost what it might. "I thank you, O Mohammed, thou great prophet, who, reading the heart of man, allows him to have four wives. I would Butheita were my second wife."

The curtain of the tent is drawn aside, and Butheita enters, a wooden waiter in her hand. All that she has to set before her guest, the beautiful dates and bananas, the black bread, the butter, all are nicely arranged on the waiter, which she now smilingly deposits at the feet of her guest.

"Now seat yourself on the mat, beloved guest, and refresh yourself with what poor Butheita has to offer you. Pray take the bread and break it, and let us eat it together in token that we are friends, and that you are sacred to me."

"And you are sacred to me," replies Mohammed, gravely, as he takes up the black bread and breaks it. Together they eat of it, and then sit down beside each other, and refresh themselves with Butheita's daintily-arranged fruits and goat's milk. Butheita tells him in her charming way of her housekeeping, of her sheep and goats, and how glad they were when she returned.

Mohammed has forgotten his ambitious plans, all the thousand wishes that agitated his heart at other times. For the moment he is once more the boy of Cavalla, communing with Nature in innocence and joyousness, for to him Butheita's fair form now represents Nature ! It is not indeed Nature itself that charms him, but Nature's fair daughter, Butheita. He must and will resist the charm, for he has now broken bread, and eaten fruit with her. He is her guest, and he must hold his young hostess sacred.

He forces himself to assume a grave manner, and directs his thoughts to turn from her fair presence and occupy themselves with the events that have taken place, and the great wrong done him. Perhaps at this moment a battle is raging on the plain of Damanbour, and Youssouf Bey is perhaps victorious over the Mamelukes. What will his fate be in that case? will not the defeated enemy avenge themselves cruelly on him? But if, on the other hand, Youssouf has been routed and put to flight, then woe to you alike, Mohammed! Youssouf will then complain of him to Cousrouf Pacha, and he will be accused of treason—yes, of treason, if he does not confess that he is a prisoner. But, if he confesses this, he will become the laughing-stock of the whole army. Yes, in Butheita's presence all that was painful and disagreeable in his position had been forgotten. Now he endeavors to force his thoughts to consider these things. Away with thoughts of thee, Queen of the Desert!

He rises from the mat, and thanks his hostess for the repast in set phrases, and with a cold manner; he begs her to pay no attention to him, and not to allow herself to be disturbed in her household occupations by him. Butheita looks at him with astonishment—an expression of offended pride in her countenance.

"You desire to be alone, stranger? I can well understand that my foolish words annoy you. I will leave you alone, sarechsme. I see well you are a proud man, and it does not seem proper to you to be alone with a Bedouin's daughter long. I can not prevent it; forgive me. I will attend to my household affairs, as you suggest. I rely on your promise, stranger, not to leave the inner apartment."

"You can rely on my word," said he, earnestly. "I am your prisoner, your slave. I am so more completely than you think."

A charming smile again lights up her brown countenance. With a joyous nod of her head, she bounds out of the tent.

CHAPTER III.

THE AGREEMENT.

THE sun was already low in the heavens. The palm-trees in the neighboring wood of Petresin threw long shadows across the yellow sand, and yet Sheik Arnhyn had not yet come, and Mohammed waited in vain for intelligence concerning his captor's purposes.

He had again been seated with Butheita on the mat, and had eaten with her as in the morning.

He had endeavored to chat gayly with the Queen of the Desert ; but her quick eye had read in his countenance that a cloud rested on his soul, and the brightness faded from her eyes.

She turned to him when he had risen from the mat and was walking thoughtfully to and fro in the narrow tent. "Tell me, O stranger, is your heart so very sad ? Is there nothing Butheita can do for you ? You are wearied ; this space is too narrow for you. Your soul, whose wings are pinioned, would fly out into the world. The world without is very beautiful, I know."

"Do you know this world ?" asked Mohammed, his lips smiling as he looked at her.

"Yes, I do," said she. "I have been with father to Tantah several times. While there I heard the scha-er tell their beautiful stories of Ey-Záhir. I listened with breathless attention. And then, too, I heard the female singers, the Gavasi. They sang beautiful songs, and the words and tones have often since resounded in my heart. Do you know, sarechsme, that often, when my father had gone out with his Bedouins to fight or to plunder, as was sometimes the case, then my only pleasure was to take down the *zammarah bisoan*, on which my mother played, and sing to its accompaniment the songs I had learned from the Gavasi. Shall I sing them for you ? Shall I ? But you must not laugh at me for repeating what the Gavasi sang in Tantah."

Without awaiting a reply, she took down the little bagpipe with its bag of goat-skin, and to its shrill accompaniment sang a quaint love-song with an admixture of the comic.

Her countenance had become grave, and a sweet fire burned in her eyes, while singing to the monotonous air in a shrill, vibrating voice, as was customary with the street-singers of the Egyptian towns. When she had finished her song, she turned the gaze of her dark eyes upon Mohammed with an inquiring expression. When she saw the smile on his countenance, and encountered the wondrous glance that seemed to penetrate to her very soul, she started. "It pleases you," said she; "I read in your countenance that you are pleased. Then I will sing you another song."

She took up her instrument again, and sang, in loud, joyous tones, a song about a gazelle-like maiden who had run away with her lover's soul, concluding with—

"Throughout the long, long night his sighing ceases not, his sighing for the dear gazelle that stole away his soul. Have pity on your lover; come back to me, gazelle!"

"Gazelle, come back to me!" cried Mohammed, with outstretched arms. "Gazelle, have pity on your lover!"

She seemed not to have heard him, bowed down over her instrument, and played in such loud, shrill tones, that it almost deafened Mohammed, who well understood Butheita's motive in playing so.

He smiled at her in silence. Butheita laughed.

"You see my song has gladdened you, and your countenance smiles again. O joy! See, there in the distance! Yes, there come two figures! That is my father, that is Sheik Arnhyn! Some one accompanies him! Rejoice, sarechsme; you will be relieved of your *ennui!*"

He laid his hand gently on her shoulder, and regarded her with a long, earnest look, that recalled the roses to her brown cheeks.

"I do not rejoice, Butheita, Queen of the Desert. I have erected a throne for you in my heart, and my heart spoke to you in the words of your song—'Throughout the long, long night my sighing ceases not, my sighing for the dear gazelle that stole away my heart.' Then speak, gazelle: shall I take you with me? will you live with me in the great city? Speak to me, gazelle!"

She gazed far out over the yellow sand toward the two specks, in which her keen eye recognized two human figures, but in which he saw only two black specks that gradually increased in size.

"Answer me, Butheita. Their coming does not gladden me, and the thought of leaving you makes me sad. If you fancy I have found it dull here, you are in error. My heart is only too much occupied. Butheita, sweetest of maidens, speak to me! Speak to me, gazelle!"

"See, sarechsme—father waves his hand!" cried she. "He already sees us standing here; his eye is as keen as an eagle's. He sees us! Come, let us step back for a moment, I have something to say to you.—To be sure I might have told you where we were," she continued, blushing, as she stepped behind the curtain. "I might as well have told you at the door, for father could not have heard it, although he could see us."

"Speak, Butheita, what did you wish to say? Speak!"

"I have forgotten, sarechsme. But I believe I wished to thank you for saying you had not found it dull here. It seems to me that only a moment has passed since I saw you yesterday, and yet it is an eternity. Yesterday lies far behind me, and to-day seems entirely different. The sun seems to be another, and I myself another, too. You see I am a very silly child."

"And why do you falter? Why do I see tears in your eyes, Butheita?"

"Because I'm a foolish child! A strange feeling comes over me," said she, sadly. "You will now go; the man who is coming with father will take you away from us, and I shall never see you again."

"Then give me, O Butheita, give me one of the roses that blossom on your lips."

"That blossom on my lips?" said she, surprised, as she passed her little brown hand across her mouth. "A rose on my lips? What does that mean, stranger?"

He bowed down over her. She felt his warm breath on her brown cheek.

"Give me a rose! Let me pluck a kiss from your lips!"

Butheita's cheeks blushed crimson. She put out her rosy lips, but then suddenly drew back and defended herself vigorously.

"Did I not tell you of my promise to my father? No man shall ever kiss me except the one who shall lead me to his tent as his wife. It is well that father is coming. Farewell, sarechsme, if I should not see you again! Farewell! and let me keep my vow!"

She gently pushes him back, and flies out of the tent to meet her father. Sheik Arnhyn recognizes and hails her with a shout of delight.

"Butheita, have you succeeded, have you guarded the stranger well?"

"I have taken good care of him; come, father, and see!" She takes her father's arm, and, without looking at the man who walks close behind him, draws the sheik quickly to the tent.

But Mohammed, with a proud and grave expression of countenance, advances to meet them. Butheita now hardly recognizes, in the haughty sarechsme, with his imperious bearing, the stranger, who is no longer a stranger to her heart.

"Speak, sheik! How dared you lead me away, a prisoner, from my army? Really, you were very presumptuous. Such conduct is calculated to excite my just anger and indignation."

The shiek made a profound obeisance.

"I trust you will forgive me, sarechsme; what I did was done at the command of my master. There he comes; he is called Osman Bey Bardissi. He comes crowned with victory, and will treat with you.—Come, Butheita, what they have to say to each other does not concern us, we have done our duty, and I have performed what I promised. The Mameluke bey has also kept his promise, and my men are already on the battle-field; I, too, must speedily return, my child, for we are to bring home costly spoils."

While walking with her to the tent, he tells her of the splendid caftans, the golden vessels, the jewelled daggers, and the costly arms, that he has already gathered from the field of battle.

In the mean while the two men have approached each other. Now they stand face to face, Osman Bey Bardissi, and the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, and regard each other with a long, gloomy look. Both, it seems, wish to avoid being the first to speak a word of greeting.

Finally, Osman breaks the silence. "This, Mohammed

Ali, is our third meeting. The first, you will recollect, was at Cavalla. Two boys, both ambitious, addressed each other in tones of mockery and derision. In the years that have since passed, I have often thought of the boy with the eagle eyes and the haughty, contemptuous smile. Our second meeting occurred a few months since, after the massacre at Aboukir. You were my enemy, and yet you acted as my friend. You saved Osman Bey Bardissi's life. Then I said to you: 'I will remember this, Mohammed Ali, and in me you have found a friend for all time.'"

"Such were your words, Osman Bey Bardissi," replied Mohammed, his voice tremulous with anger, "and now I have received a proof of your friendship! You have had me snared like a wild beast, and abducted from my camp and my soldiers, to become a laughing-stock for them and an object of derision for your people."

Bardissi shook his head quietly. "You are in error, Mohammed Ali; none of my men know what has occurred, nor do I believe that yours do. No one shall ever learn, I swear it by Allah, where the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, has passed this night, or by whom he was abducted. No, no one shall ever learn it! You can rest assured, Sheik Arnhyn is not the man to babble like a woman when he should hold his peace, and Butheita is his obedient daughter. This matter shall be kept to ourselves. We meet to-day for the third time, and do you know why, Mohammed Ali? I caused you to be abducted because I promised you friendship. I did not wish to confront you as an enemy; against my wish a bullet might have chanced to strike you; and, I know not how it is, but I feel drawn to you, I feel a desire to be your friend. I wish to fight at your side, and not against you. We two, O Mohammed—we two, united—could make our land happy, great, and free, I feel assured. I read this in your countenance when we met on the ship. A voice seemed to whisper in my heart: 'He can assist you, he must be your friend!' Your eye glittered as I have seen but one other glitter; a proud consciousness of power was expressed in your features, such as I have seen in those of but one other man, and to this day I regret that he was our enemy, and that he has left us."

"And who was this man?"

"He was a French general. They called him Bonaparte, and he was a great man. It seems to me you resemble him, Mohammed Ali; like him you seem to stand gazing out upon the world, conscious of power and heroism, and resolved to bring it into subjection, as he was, but could not. For, observe, this was his mistake: he assumed a hostile attitude toward the Mamelukes, instead of seeking their friendship. And this I now hope of you, Mohammed Ali, that you will make friends of the Mamelukes, and not remain on the side of our treacherous enemies the Turks. It does not beseem you. Your soul is great, and your actions heroic! Why are you with the Turks? It does not beseem you."

"It does not beseem me!" cried Mohammed excitedly; "truly it does not beseem me—"

"Be still, my friend, I pray you!" said Bardissi, interrupting him. "Listen first to what I have to say. Do you know whence I come? Look at me! Do you see these dark spots on my clothing? 'Tis blood, Mohammed Ali, human blood. It splashed on me from many a wound! Go thither, Mohammed Ali; go to the plain of Damanhour. The bodies of the dead lie thick there—the bodies of dead Turks, Mohammed Ali!"

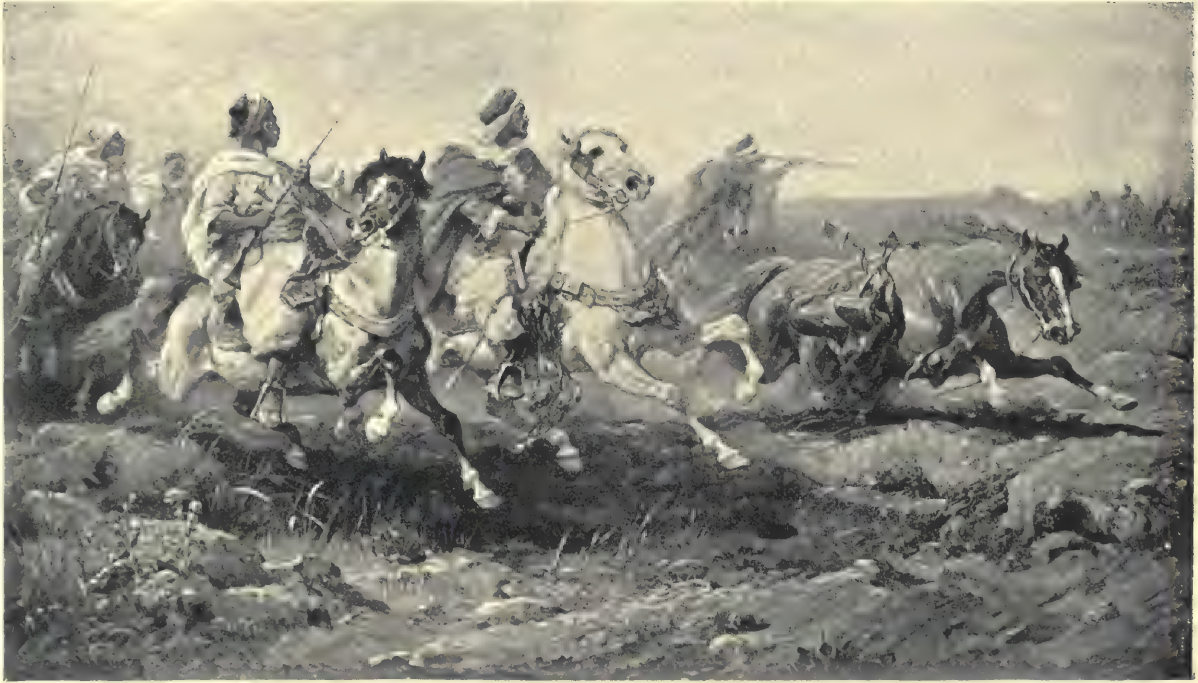
"And the bodies of many Mamelukes also, I should think," rejoined Mohammed quickly.

Osman Bey shook his head slowly. "Not many! You are in error, Mohammed Ali. We hurriedly counted them. Three thousand Turks lie dead upon the battle-field of Damanhour; of our men, of the Mamelukes, hardly sixty!"

"That is impossible!" cried Mohammed, in dismay.

"It seems impossible, yet it is the truth, Mohammed Ali," replied Bardissi, drawing himself up proudly. "I tell you, three thousand Turks and hardly sixty Mamelukes; and ours is the battle-field. Those of the Turks who were not shot down or sabred have fled to bear to Cairo the disastrous intelligence—that eight hundred Mamelukes have vanquished over three thousand Turks led by Youssouf Bey, the *kiaya* of the viceroy. The proud man is defeated, and may return to Cairo with the miserable remnants of his magnificence to announce his disgrace. I tell you, Mohammed, it was a wondrous battle! Youssouf Bey had drawn up his army on the plain of Damanhour, behind them their artillery. While we were forming in front of them, their artillery began to thunder; it was to carry death into our ranks, and it succeeded. Fearful was the first shock! I began to fear lest my men should flinch. I called to them in a loud voice, and with them bore down upon the enemy with the speed of the lightning, regardless of the thundering artillery. But its discharges were murderous, and I saw that it was impossible to advance farther in this direction. We then turned, and, before the Turks could take measures to prevent it, fell upon their unprotected left flank and bore down upon their ranks. The first rank, surprised and terrified by my sudden flank attack, gave way, and their infantry was thrown into disorder. The blows of our ataghans fell thick and fast. The enemy turned and fled in wild disorder, we following them. Mohammed Ali, the slaughter was dreadful! Eight hundred Mamelukes vanquished over three thousand Turks! Sheik Arnhyn's Bedouins, who are now on the field, can show you the rich spoils. Let them rob the dead; for me and mine, who scorn to do this, spoils enough still remain; we have captured all their artillery, and munitions of war in abundance. 'It was a glorious day,' so say the Mameluke beys. 'It was a disastrous day,' will the viceroy, throned in the proud citadel at Cairo, lament.

"Do you now understand, O sarechsme, why I caused you to be abducted from your camp by my friend Sheik Arnhyn? I did it partly on my own account, and partly out of friendship for you. You look at me inquiringly; you do not understand! I will explain. Intelligence had been brought to me that, should Youssouf Bey be defeated, you were to march rapidly to his assistance. I saw the messenger sent by him to call you to his assistance; you would have come too late. You could only have shared defeat had you come up with your troops, exhausted by their march, and attacked the Mamelukes, flushed with victory. They would have defeated you, and therefore do I consider it an act of friendship to have prevented your coming at all. Yet, I would not conceal the truth. Truly, Osman Bey Bardissi loves the truth, and therefore I tell you I also did it on my own account, and on



THE ATTACK OF THE CAVALRY.

From a painting by Adolf Schreyer.

account of my Mamelukes. I well know what mettle your other generals are made of! From Youssouf Bey and Taher Pacha the Mameluke Beys have nothing to fear; I know them, and know that they are poor soldiers; but of you, Mohammed Ali, I have a different opinion. When I saw you on the ship, I said to myself: 'This man will become a hero; woe to us when he confronts us in battle, but joy if we can win him to our side and make him our friend!' Therefore, I entreat you, be our friend, Mohammed Ali. Abandon the treacherous Turks, for treacherous they are! We saw this at Aboukir, and I think have aroused indignation in your gallant heart to see them massacre so many of our noblest beys through vile trickery and treachery. I can well understand that you cannot admit this while you are a sarechsme of the Turks; yet, be one of us, Mohammed Ali. Confess to yourself that the Turks are waging an unjust war, and that treachery is their favorite weapon. It is my firm conviction that we shall ultimately succeed in vanquishing and driving them from the country; but to do this we need strong men and heroic hearts. I cannot consent to their possession of such a man as yourself. Come to us, Mohammed Ali! You shall be our first and greatest! What Mourad Bey was for us, that shall Mohammed Ali be for the Mamelukes. We will bow to your wisdom in humility! we will obey all your commands! Be one of us, Mohammed Ali. Join us, and we will vanquish the Turks and reoccupy Cairo! You shall be enthroned in the citadel as our chieftain; you shall rule over Cairo and be our brother and comrade. Abandon the Turks! Now, Mohammed Ali, I have finished. Give me an answer!"

His eager gaze was fastened on Mohammed's proud, tranquil countenance in breathless suspense. The latter making no reply, Bardissi repeated, in tones of entreaty almost, "Answer me, Mohammed Ali!"

"Do you really suppose I can answer you?" said Mohammed, gently. "Look at me; I wear the uniform of a Turkish general, and am in the grand-sultan's, and, more immediately, in Cousrouf Pacha, the viceroy's service. I am a soldier, who, wearing his uniform, must ever be mindful that he has sworn the oath of fidelity. Moreover, I am your prisoner. Do you suppose it would beseem the soldier to treat with his enemy against his commander-in-chief? Would it, do you think, become the prisoner to accept the proposals of him who for the moment is his master; would it not look as though the prisoner wished in this manner to purchase his freedom? And now answer me, Bardissi!"

"This is my answer," said Bardissi, bowing his head with a smile: "You are free, and no longer a prisoner. You were entrapped, and brought here, because I wished to speak with you. This I have done, and now you are free. And now your decision, if you please!"

"Osman Bey Bardissi is far too great a hero, and far too brave a soldier and honorable man, not to know what emotions agitate my soul. See, I wear a general's uniform, and my army corps is awaiting me! You cannot suppose that I will abandon them, or incite them to treason! As yet, I serve the viceroy alone," he continued in a lower voice, "and, as yet, I do not know that I can depend entirely on their fidelity."

"However, you do not say 'no' to my proposals?" said Bardissi.

"I say wait, Bardissi! He who wishes to attain fortune must not grasp at it with too quick a hand. He may catch hold of a corner of its mantle, but fortune itself might escape him. Only he who is calm and collected can depend on securing it, Bardissi. Therefore, I say, wait! Yet, this will I say, in addition," continued he, his countenance assuming a milder expression, "Give me your hand before we part. It is the hand of a brave man, and I am glad to press it in my own."

Bardissi joyously laid his broad, sinewy hand in Mohammed's, and grasped it firmly.

"I repeat it, Bardissi, wait. In eight days you shall have an answer from me. Perhaps it will be communicated to you through common report—perhaps secretly. Therefore, name some one through whom I can communicate with you."

Bardissi made no answer, but glanced uneasily at Mohammed. The latter smiled.

"You are suspicious; you have already experienced too much treachery from your enemies not to fear Mohammed Ali might prove like the rest. I require no answer. In case of necessity, I will send you an answer through Mourad's widow, Sitta Nefysseh."

"She is our mistress, and we all reverence and obey her as we should, the widow of our great chieftain."

"I know you all honor and love her!" said Mohammed, with a slight smile. "May I now depart?"

Bardissi inclined his head. "You are free! I shall ride on in advance, and deprive myself of the pleasure of accompanying you through the desert. We might be seen together, and suspicion excited against you. I ride in that direction. The dromedary will bear you back to your camp by a shorter route across the desert. She who brought you here will also accompany you back. She knows the way, and is discreet and cautious, like her father. My horse and servants await me behind that hill. And now let us part!"

"Let us part!" repeated Mohammed, extending his hand for a parting grasp.

"I will accompany you to the tent," said Bardissi, "and give orders to have the dromedary saddled for you while you are strengthening yourself for the ride."

They walked to the tent side by side, and Bardissi called the sheik, and gave him his instructions.

Mohammed entered the tent. No one was there. He walked into the inner apartment, and so noiselessly that his step was not heard by her who stood behind the partition, by Butheita. She stood there, her head bowed down, and her gaze fixed on the spot where she had broken bread with Mohammed. Now, hearing her name murmured behind her, she started and turned around. He observed that her manner was sad, and that the smile had departed from her lips.

"You are sad, Butheita," whispered he, approaching her.

She cast down her eyes before his glance. "You are going away," said she. "Father is already saddling the dromedary, and you are about to leave us."

"I must go," said he, gently. "Duty calls me away, while love would gladly hold me back. But I am a man, and must listen to the voice of duty only. They say you are to accompany, and show me the way?"

She shook her head resolutely. "I beg you, say that you do not wish it, that you desire my father to accompany you."

"And why should I do so?" asked he, gazing searchingly into her countenance. "Do you hate me so that you are unwilling to pass an hour in my company? Did I conduct myself unbecomingly while we were together in the palanquin this morning? Why will you not accord me the happiness of riding across the desert with you again? Why do you hate me?"

She remained silent for a while, and then slowly shook her head. "No, it is not that; it is something quite different. It pains me to see you leave. This morning, I could ride with you across the desert; then I did not know you, and did not fear you."

"And now you are afraid of me?" said he, gazing in her eyes intently.

"No, not afraid of you, but afraid of myself," said she, in a low voice. "I am afraid I might love you; and that may not be," cried she, in a firmer tone. "You are a great and distinguished man, and would laugh at the poor Bedouin child if she should regard you otherwise than as a great sarechsme, who had condescended to honor her father's tent by accepting his daughter's hospitality. I had best not ride with you. And I have already told father so."

"And the reason, too, Butheita?" said he, smiling.

"No, sarechsme! I told father I was weary with my long ride. He loves me dearly, and, although he had intended returning with the bey to collect the spoils from the field, he is, nevertheless, ready to accompany you if you will permit him."

"I am to permit you to cause me pain, and deny myself a great happiness, Butheita. Yet, I understand you, and must say that I rejoice to see you act as you do. I rejoice in you, my star-eyed desert queen! Be assured, Mohammed Ali will never forget you. And now, tell me, will you not quite forget me either?"

"No, that I will not, sarechsme."

"Will you also be mindful of your promise to your father to allow him only to kiss you, who shall one day lead you to his home?"

"I shall ever be mindful of this promise."

"Then, Butheita, then will I kiss you," cried he, and with passionate violence he clasped her in his arms, and pressed a kiss on her lips. He then turned and left the tent.

Butheita sank down upon the mat, and with outstretched arms she knelt there, motionless, a statue of ecstasy, of blissful love.

Mohammed stepped out before the tent, and beckoned to the sheik to approach.

"I beg that you will accompany me, sheik; it will be too fatiguing for your daughter to take this ride the second time."

"Gladly, master; she has already told me so herself, and I am ready," said he, commanding the dromedary to kneel down. Mohammed sprang into the palanquin, and the sheik followed him.

"Farewell, Butheita," he cried. She did not answer; she did not wish to go out, as he might see her tears, and her father, too, might observe them. She therefore remained silent. She had drawn the curtain over the entrance to the inner apartment, and lay on the mat weeping; weeping and laughing at the same time, for joy and pain—ecstasy and pain were contending for victory in her heart. "He is gone, gone! and yet he is ever with me."

The dromedary flew over the desert still more swiftly than in the morning, his feet hardly touching the ground; clouds of sand were whirled aloft, and enveloped the animal and the riders as with a thick veil. No one saw them, and, had any one seen them, he could not have told who they were.

Arrived at the boundary line of the desert, where two horses awaited them, the sheik halted. Having dismounted with Mohammed, he addressed a few loud words to the dromedary; it turned, and flew homeward across the desert.

"It knows the way," said the sheik, smiling. "It will return alone to Butheita."

They mounted the horses, and rode on swiftly through meadows, and palm and sycamore groves.

The sheik now drew rein. "Do you see that black line standing out against the evening sky? That is your camp. If you desire it, I will accompany you farther. It rests with you to decide."

"I will ride on alone, sheik. Farewell, and accept this for your hospitality."

He held out to the sheik a purse filled with gold-pieces. The latter proudly rejected it.

"With one breath you say things that do not agree with each other. You wish to pay me, and yet you say you have enjoyed my hospitality. The guest does not pay, unless it be with love and friendship. If you pay me in that way, I shall rejoice, and Butheita also, I know."

"O sheik, I thank you both for your hospitality, and will love you and hold you in good remembrance. Farewell, sheik!"

He pressed his knees to his horse's flanks and rode off in a rapid gallop. Evening had already sunk down when he approached the plain where his soldiers lay encamped. He dismounted, and left his horse to return alone. He then glided stealthily to the rear of his tent, and, raising the canvas, slipped in. No one was in this apartment where his couch lay, but in the first one he heard loud voices. His officers were speaking of him. They were making anxious inquiries and conjectures as to where the general might be, and were considering whether they should make further search for him or break up camp and return to Cairo. They were the voices of his bim bashis and boulouk bashis. Smiling, he listened for a time to their conversation. He then drew back the curtain and stepped into the outer apartment. A joyous shout greeted his entrance. They eagerly rushed forward, and anxiously inquired where he had been, the meaning of his absence, and if any evil had befallen him.

He gazed at them haughtily.

"Am I, the general, to be called to account by you, my officers?"

They instantly ceased speaking, and saluted him with profound obeisance.

"I know," continued he, in milder tones, "that sympathy for me prompted your inquiries, and will therefore tell you where I have been. I rode last night, entirely alone, to Damanhour, where I knew Youssouf Bey lay with his men. I wished to learn if we could reach them in time, and therefore rode with the wings of the wind. When I reached their camp, the battle had already begun. It was too late to march to Youssouf Bey's assistance. I therefore did what I could, drew my sword and fought in the ranks as a common soldier. The day was adverse ; the Turkish army lies defeated on the plain of Damanhour ! Now let us remain here and wait. If the victors, the Mameluke beys, feel disposed to try their fortune in another battle, by Allah they shall find us ready to receive them ! But, if they do not show themselves by to-morrow, we will turn and march back to Cairo. Now go and announce to the soldiers what has taken place."

They bowed profoundly, and the deference and silence with which they now left the tent were in marked contrast with their previous noisy behavior. The general knew how to impress them with a sense of his superiority ; they all recognized in him a great man, and felt his iron hand on their necks. All now grows still in the camp. The soldiers retire to rest, and Mohammed also sinks down on his mat to repose, and, if possible, to sleep after so much fatigue and excitement.

But sleep refused to come at his bidding. He arose and walked to and fro in his tent for a long time. At first he was merely the loving man, and beheld only Butheita's countenance ; but the hero in him soon gained the upper hand. Mohammed profoundly considered Osman Bey's words, and how he must shape his future. His keen vision had observed and made him acquainted with the men who surrounded him, and with the relations to which he must now either conform or against which he must now rise in arms. He had been in a state of doubt and hesitation all along ; his future was enveloped in a thick veil, and he was not aware what shape his destiny was to take ; yet he had closely observed all. He had seen that poor Egypt was a plaything of ambition, of rapacity, of intrigue—a prey for all. Nowhere in the midst of this reign of intrigue and passion had he seen law and justice prevail. He saw only a province trodden under foot, a bleeding land, that must perish in its citizens, unless a deliverer should come who knew how to bind up and heal its wounds. Could he be its deliverer? Was it his mission to raise up the down-trodden people from the dust, to erect for himself a throne upon the ground that smoked with the blood of so many victims? Was this his mission, and was there a way that would lead him up the steep ascent to the throne? All this he considered earnestly and profoundly throughout the entire night, and, when the rising sun had dispelled the clouds of the morning, it was clear, too, in his soul. He saw the way he must go to reach his goal.

"And this way I will go," said he to himself, in low tones. "I will consider nothing but my interest and my aim. I will avail myself of all means that are useful. Wise, shrewd, cautious, using every thing, and recoiling from nothing, let this be the motto of my immediate future: 'To overthrow the enemy by rebellion were unwise; he who usurps another's place is always a rebel, and deserving of punishment.' I must be called to the throne by the people themselves, then I shall be a legitimate ruler. To attain this be your task, Mohammed Ali. Equip yourself and collect your energies. Be the lion and the tiger, the serpent and the hero: in this way only can you accomplish your end"

Early on the following morning the videttes announced to the sarechsme that no trace of the enemy was anywhere to be seen.

"Then we shall return to Cairo," said the sarechsme to his bim bashis; "give orders to prepare to march."

The loud shouts of joy that resounded without announced to the sarechsme that the soldiers were well pleased to return home. "I am, too!" said he to himself, smiling. "I am well pleased that we are not compelled to confront the Mamelukes! Perhaps we shall soon be fighting side by side!"

In the mean while intelligence of the defeat of the Turkish army had reached Cairo. Many had heard it with intense satisfaction, many with sorrow, according to whether they were friends or enemies of the viceroy.

Yet, when Mohammed Ali's troops marched through the streets, they were greeted with shouts of joy. They returned, as the sarechsme had ordered, quietly to their barracks.

Mohammed Ali also repaired to his house to rest and to wait.

In the mean while the remnant of the defeated army had also returned to Cairo; and Youssouf Bey, who had succeeded in making his escape from the slaughter, repaired, at the very hour when Mohammed entered the city with his troops to the citadel, to the viceroy. With furious despair and tears of rage, he told the story of his terrible defeat, thinking by this display of anguish to wash his hands of the disgrace of having been vanquished with three thousand Turks by eight hundred Mamelukes! But, as though the number of his troops ought not to have been sufficient to insure victory over the small force of the Mamelukes, he sought to throw the blame on others.

"I was betrayed—betrayed! Mohammed Ali and Taher Pacha are to blame for this disaster. They should have come to my assistance, but they left me to shift for myself. That is infamous conduct! Here, before your throne, I accuse of treason, above all, Mohammed Ali, and also Taher Pacha! They knew I was in danger: had they come up, I should not have lost the battle; but they did not come, because they desired my downfall, in order that they might ascend to the height of your favor over my neck! They are both traitors. I entreat you to cause searching inquiries to be made, and to hold to a strict accountability those who so shamefully deserted me."

Cousrouf Pacha felt deeply touched by the anguish and despair of his favorite, and perhaps he also felt a foreboding rise in his heart that Mohammed Ali was still his enemy, and was seeking revenge for his long-since-destroyed happiness.

"You are right, Youssouf Bey. I promise you strict investigation shall be made, and woe to them if they fail to justify themselves!"

A messenger entered to announce to the viceroy that Mohammed Ali had returned to Cairo with his troops. The viceroy immediately dispatched a messenger to the sarechsme, ordering him to come up to the citadel at once, and without any delay whatever, to render account to the viceroy of his action.

Mohammed heard the command with perfect composure. "Tell the viceroy that I will come up to the citadel to-morrow, in the broad light of day, with my soldiers. My weary troops must rest to-night, and without them I do not desire to appear before your master. Therefore, to-morrow morning, rest assured that I shall come."

As he had said, in the broad light of day, and accompanied by his soldiers, the sarechsme repaired to the citadel. An ominous cry resounded from their lips as they stood before the gateway, and this cry was heard in the apartment of the viceroy.

"We demand our pay! We want bread, we want money!" This was the soldiers' cry. Now, surrounded by his bim bashis and boulouk bashis, the sarechsme entered the apartment of the viceroy, Cousrouf Pacha, who was awaiting him. In utter disregard of deference and usage, the general did not wait to be addressed by the viceroy. With a military greeting, he stepped forward and said, in a loud voice:

"As you hear, highness, your troops have come to demand of you that to which they have assuredly long been entitled—they have come to demand their pay!"

"I see," said Cousrouf, in low tones, casting a furtive glance of hatred at Mohammed—"I see that you are still the insolent boy of Cavalla!"

"I believe," replied Mohammed, also speaking in subdued tones—"I believe we are both what we then were; and I shall prove it to you!"

He stepped back. No one had heard the brief conversation that passed between them, but every one saw Cousrouf's cheek grow pale, and his eye sparkle with anger.

"I will send you an answer," said he, after a pause. "Return to your house, and order the soldiers to return to their barracks. My *defterdar* will bring you an answer."

He turned and left the apartment.

"Well, for this time we will be patient and wait," said Mohammed, addressing his officers.

His voice was threatening, and his officers understood that their general was prepared to resort to extreme measures, and they rejoiced over it, for the viceroy was always haughty and overbearing in his manner toward them, and they all hated him. They would all have been pleased to see their bold general revolt against him.

"We will wait," they whispered to each other—"we will wait! What our sarechsme does, we will do also!"

They returned, in obedience to his command, to their quarters and barracks.

The sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, a peculiar smile on his lips, also returned to his palace.

"The decisive hour approaches! Cousrouf Pacha shall be convinced that I, as he says, am still the same Mohammed Ali I was at Cavalla! Yes, still the same, and still determined to have revenge!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE REVOLT.

To have gained a week is to have gained a great deal.

Within this time the viceroy will succeed in replenishing his coffers. His defterdar is very skillful in the art of getting money, and who should understand the art if not the minister of finance? He will find means to collect from the ulemas, from the rich sheiks, and from the merchants, money enough to quiet his rebellious troops. A week is a long period, and he will find means to satisfy them all.

But, after a few days, the terrible intelligence reaches Cousrouf Pacha: Taher Pacha is defeated; the stronghold Migné has been captured by the Mameluke beys. Taher Pacha is defeated, and is returning with his army-corps to Cairo!

"He shall not come, he must not come!" cried the viceroy, angrily. "No, he must not come; as it is, we have rebellious soldiers enough here now. They would unite with Taher's troops, and clamor for pay again. And our coffers are empty. Send messengers to meet the advancing troops, with instructions to General Taher to march with his corps to Tantah, and there await further orders. In any case, I forbid him to return here to Cairo. Is my capital to be made a camp ? Is it merely an immense barrack in which these insolent fellows are to puff themselves up and do violence to all honest and respectable people ? It is enough to have to tolerate Mohammed Ali and his men here. Taher Pacha shall not unite with them. Quick, dispatch the messengers at once ! "

The messengers, in accordance with the viceroy's instructions, hastened forth in the direction from which Taher must come. But the messengers did not meet him. He did not come by the expected route. He had taken another—a secret messenger having come to him with this warning :

" Hasten forward, Taher—you are to be kept at a distance from the capitol ! It is intended to withhold their pay from your soldiers ! "

He did not know from whom this messenger came, but he believed him. Resolved not to remain where a message from the viceroy could reach him, Taher Pacha took another road, and, before another messenger could reach him, Taher entered Cairo with his army. The uproar in the streets, the shouting of the soldiers as they greeted their friends, announced to the viceroy what had taken place. And in great wrath he learned from the defterdar, who came running to the viceroy in despair, that his fears were only too well founded.

Yes, it was as he expected. The soldiers had not gone to their barracks ; Taher had not come to seek repose in his house, but to demand his and his soldiers' pay. " We are in rags, and starving ; we need shoes and clothes. Give us our pay, that we may satisfy our hunger and clothe ourselves ! "

" But how am I to pay them ? " said the defterdar, addressing the viceroy in anxious tones. " Our coffers are empty, and all resources exhausted. I know not what to do or where to turn."

The viceroy sat gazing at him gloomily. Suddenly a thought seemed to occur to him ; his countenance brightened. " Mohammed Ali is shrewd and fertile in resources. We must apply to him. He will help us out of our difficulty. He is thoughtful, cool, and resolute. True, he assumed a hostile attitude toward me a few days ago, but he must be reconciled.

He must be prevented from uniting with Taher. The two united would be a fearful combination against me."

He instructs the defterdar to go in person to Mohammed Ali to request him to come to the viceroy. "We cannot pay the troops, but we can find enough to pay the general's salary."

Cousrouf Pacha takes from his own private funds ten purses of gold-pieces. He carries them himself to the apartment in which he intends to receive the sarechsme.

In the mean while the minister of finance had, in accordance with the viceroy's instructions, repaired with great haste to the palace in which the sarechsme resided. A body of Albanian soldiers were encamped about the palace. They called themselves the body-guard of the sarechsme. The heart of the finance minister throbbed with dismay when he beheld their daring, resolute faces.

"If this is the sarechsme's body-guard, then woe to the viceroy!" said he to himself, as he ascended the stairway that led to the general's apartment. With a trembling voice and humble demeanor, he delivered the viceroy's message to the general.

"He begs you to come to him. He wishes to be reconciled to you; he will himself hand you the arrearages of pay. But I entreat you, come without your great suite—it might be wrongly interpreted. I mean well with you; I am your friend. Do not come with your body-guard, sarechsme."

"We two should understand each other better," replied Mohammed, smiling derisively. "You tremble for me. I thank you, but see, I am not trembling at all myself. He who pursues an honest course and is faithful to his master and his service, has no occasion to tremble. This you shall see, for I intend to go to the viceroy entirely alone. Only my men shall at least know where I have gone, that is all. Come!"

With a haughty smile, the defterdar following, he descended the broad stairway of his palace, and cordially greeted the soldiers standing about the gateway, who received him with shouts of joy.

"Be patient, my friends, I entreat you, be patient, and await my return. I will return in an hour ; wait here for me that long. Should I not return by that time, seek me."

The defterdar, who hears every word of this, murmurs to himself : "It will be necessary to acquaint his highness with this, that he may be on his guard, and not detain the sarechsme in his fortress too long. The consequences might be dangerous."

In humble terms he begs to be permitted to hasten in advance to announce his coming to the viceroy. The sarechsme assents with a gracious inclination of the head, and smiles benignantly on the finance minister.

"We understand each other right well, my good defterdar. You are right ; go in advance, and announce me to the viceroy."

He waited a short time in the court-yard, conversing with the soldiers who gathered around him to complain of their wrongs.

"I am going up to the citadel to the viceroy, in your interests. Wait patiently for an entire hour," repeated Mohammed.

He then mounts his horse and rides up to the citadel. The defterdar has hardly had time to convey the warning to the viceroy :

"Do not detain him here too long, highness. If he remains here longer than an hour, his soldiers will come up here after him in open revolt. Taher's troops have not gone to their barracks, and are only awaiting the signal to join them."

Cousrouf nodded his assent, and muttered to himself : "I was wrong in not treading this viper under foot in Cavalla ; now it intends to bite me—I feel it, it intends to bite me ; but it shall not. I will draw its fangs."

His Nubian slave now enters and announces to his master that the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, stands without, awaiting his pleasure. Cousrouf's countenance quickly assumes a friendly expression.

"Leave me, defterdar, and await me in the next room. I shall not detain the sarechsme long."

The defterdar withdrew, and the Nubian slave opened the door to admit the general. With a military greeting, Mohammed Ali entered, and advanced toward the viceroy, who, on this occasion, received him standing, and not indolently reclining on his cushions, as was his habit; he even stepped forward to meet him, extending his hand, and saluting more cordially than usual.

"Sarechsme, when we last met, it was in anger. This I have deeply regretted, for you know what I think of you."

"Yes, highness, I know what you think of me," replied Mohammed, quietly.

The viceroy saw the derisive smile that played about his lips.

"I think well of you, Mohammed! I expect great things of you, and know that you are the truest and most devoted of my servants."

Mohammed looked up at him with a strange, inquiring glance. "Of your servants, highness? I did not know that I was one of them. I am devoted to you, as the general of the viceroy's troops should be, yet both of us are the servants of our master, the grand-sultan, at Stamboul."

"You are right, both of us are servants, the grand-sultan is master of us both; but I am his representative here, and it therefore follows that the proud sarechsme need not blush when I call him my faithful servant, as I stand for him in the place of the grand-sultan. And it is because you recognize in me his representative, and because you have sworn to serve him faithfully, that I have such confidence in your devotion to me."

"Highness, I am faithful to my oath, faithful to the grand-sultan, and faithful to you. I deeply regret that discord has arisen between you and me, ever devoted to you as I am. But let us not speak of this. I suppose you have called me on account of my troops. They have long received no pay; they are without food, and their clothes are in rags. They need and demand their pay. I, as their protector and general, must insist on your compliance with their just demand."

"The week within which I promised to pay them has not yet elapsed, four days still remain," said Cousrouf, suppressing his rage with difficulty; "therefore wait for your soldiers' pay, but you, Mohammed, you shall not wait. See how I honor and esteem you! There lie ten purses of gold-pieces, that is your salary. I joyously give it you out of my own private funds. Take your pay, my sarechsme!"

He pointed to a little marble table, on which the ten purses, through whose meshes the gold-pieces glittered, were laid in a row.

"I accept them, highness. It is my salary, and I am justly entitled to it. I accept them, and, though you only gave me my due, I nevertheless thank you for having done so."

"And you are now reconciled, Mohammed Ali, and no longer angry?" said Cousrouf, in flattering tones.

Mohammed bowed profoundly.

"How could I presume to be angry with your gracious highness? You know my devotion to you, Cousrouf."

"Prove it! Give me your advice. You know the country, you know the city; your eye is quick, and you observe much. I know Mohammed Ali never walks indolently through the streets; his eye sees more than other eyes, his ear hears more than other ears; he knows far more than any of my servants. O Mohammed, if many of them were like you, I need not be anxious and pass sleepless nights. But you, Mohammed, are wise and shrewd, and have much experience and knowledge of the world. Advise me, sarechsme, as to the means of raising money. I myself, I confess, am at a loss to devise new means of replenishing my empty coffers."

"I thank you for the high honor you do me," replied Mohammed. "Advise you, the wise and experienced statesman! How flattering such a privilege to me! Yet, unfortunately, I must confess that I know not what to advise. But," he suddenly added, "one thing occurs to me. You have taxed the merchants, you have taken money from the ulemas, you have exacted it from the sheiks; but one thing you have forgotten—to tax the women, highness!"

"The women!" said Cousrouf, recoiling a step. "How could I tax the women? What women?"

"The wives of the Mameluke beys!" replied Mohammed. "You were gracious enough, highness, to permit these ladies to remain here in their palaces, in which they were accustomed to live like princesses."

"I gave my word, Mohammed Ali, that the wives of the Mameluke beys should remain here, and that they should not be molested. I gave my word. I did it because I knew that the people would suffer if the rich ladies, whose splendid households give employment and food to so many people, should be banished from the city. I did it for this reason, and must now keep my word."

"And they shall remain here unmolested, highness. Their liberty is not to be curtailed, neither is any harm to be done to their persons. But they must yield to necessity, and surrender some of their treasure. Mourad Bey's widow alone is very rich."

"Rich and courted by all the world!" cried Cousrouf Pacha. "All Cairo is devoted to her! She is honored like a saint almost."

"Because she is rich," replied Mohammed, quietly. "The rich are always honored; the world falls down and worships them; but let them become poor, and the world drags them into the dust, and thus avenges itself for its former humiliation. Sitta Nefysseh, Mourad's widow, is rich. Her apartments, I am told, glitter with golden dishes and vases, gold and silver coins are piled up in closets, and whole chests are filled with jewelry and precious stones of every description, brought home by Mourad from his wars."

The viceroy's eyes sparkled.

"It would certainly be desirable to get possession of some of this treasure, yet we cannot become robbers. If we could do so by lawful means, it would be well. Tell me of some such means, Mohammed Ali."

"I know of no such means, highness," said Mohammed, shrugging his shoulders. "I only know that Sitta Nefysseh, as it is said, has a secret understanding with the beys, the comrades of her deceased husband. As I understand it, you only promised the wives of the Mamelukes permission to remain here, and protection under the condition that they were to abstain from all intercourse with the Mameluke beys. Yet it is known that Osman Bardissi and L'Elfi Bey, the two Mameluke chieftains, were not long since in Cairo, and that they paid the Sitta a visit. They both love her. They adore her, and defy every danger in order to see her. Of this I am certain, highness."

"If this is true," cried Cousrouf, "I have some pretext for calling her to account."

"And true it is, I assure you," replied Mohammed. "I myself saw Bardissi as he stepped out of the back gate of the park and mounted his horse, and a short time before I saw L'Elfi. Perhaps they had both come for money for the payment of their troops."

"I well know, myself," said Cousrouf, "that Mourad's widow is very rich, and generous to her friends. I will see her this very day, and this very day shall she be called to account."

"But by whom ?" asked Mohammed, quickly. "The cadi and the sheik will not answer ; for they, like all Cairo, love Sitta Nefysseh."

"Then I will call her to account myself !" cried Cousrouf, in resolute tones.

"But have you proofs of her guilt ?" asked Mohammed. "Sitta Nefysseh is wise, and knows how to defend herself. Therefore proofs, and not the accusation only, are needed."

"I shall secure proofs ! When we are determined to accuse any one, proofs are never wanting. Else of what use were our clerks and police ? And now you may go, sarechsme. I thank you for your advice, and will quickly proceed to raise money from the Sitta before she suspects any thing. I thank you once more for your advice, Mohammed, and I shall always remember that you are the shrewdest and most faithful of all those who surround me—you perceive, I no longer say, of my servants. Let me say, as I most gladly do, Mohammed Ali—let me say, the most faithful of my friends ! Does that please you ?"

Mohammed replied with a profound bow only, and then silently withdrew.

The hour had not yet passed, and his soldiers waited peaceably, as he had commanded them. The Nubian slave of the viceroy followed his horse, carrying the ten purses of gold-pieces. The general dismounted at the door of the palace, and waited till the slave had come up and taken the golden treasure into his house. Mohammed then went to the grand hall and sent word down by a servant, that a deputation of twenty-two of his men were to come up to him. The sarechsme received them standing beside a table, on which lay the ten purses of gold-pieces. He greeted them cordially.

"I saw the viceroy in your behalf, and begged for your pay. I was told that the week had not yet expired, and that you should wait. The viceroy, however, my soldiers, paid me the salary due me. They had forgotten to pay my salary ever since I have been in Egypt; it has therefore now become a considerable sum. I have received ten purses of gold, and I am really in need of this money to meet my household expenses. But who knows when you will receive your pay? We all share danger and want together, however; therefore let us also share the good things of this world together. Five purses I will keep for myself, five purses belong to my soldiers. My housekeeper will go down into the court-yard with you, and distribute the money among you. I give it, not as your pay, but as a token of my friendship and satisfaction."

"Long live our general!" shouted the men; and they rushed forward, fell on their knees, and kissed his garments. He bade them rise, called his housekeeper, and gave him the five purses. The latter then went down with the soldiers to the court-yard. Mohammed followed them with his eyes, his countenance lighted up with a peculiar smile:

"Now they are mine! With the money I gave them, I have bought their souls! Yes, they are mine! The seed I have sown is ripening. O Cousrouf, only follow my advice! Insult the one woman who is above all honored and esteemed in Cairo, the one before whom all bow in reverence—insult her, that the harvest-day of my revenge may soon come! But one thing still remains to be done: Sitta Nefysseh must be warned."

He stealthily stepped out into the garden through the side-gate. Unseen by his soldiers he hastily crossed the park, and, opening a small door in the high wall that surrounded it, stepped out into the street.

It was silent and deserted. No one saw the cautious sarechsme, closely enveloped in his mantle, wend his way hastily through the narrow alleys to a little house that stood alone in the outskirts of the city. He crossed the threshold without meeting any one. All was still in the dark, narrow passage. He opened the door of the chamber. On a mat sat an old woman, weaving woolen cloth.

"Are you the mother of Kachef Youssouf?" asked the sarechsme.

She turned around. "Yes, I am. You have not come to arrest my son? He has not gone out to battle, he remains in Cairo, and is the faithful servant of his gracious mistress, Sitta Nefysseh."

"That I know. I have not come on a hostile errand, but merely to speak to him. Where is he?"

"Where he always is, master, with his gracious mistress. If you wish it, I will call him; a door opens from this house into Sitta Nefysseh's park, and I know where my son is to be found."

"Then call him quickly."

The old woman hastened away. In a short time she returned with her son Youssouf.

"Do you know me?" asked Mohammed, advancing to meet him.

"Yes, who does not know the brave sarechsme, Mohammed Ali?"

"Do you love your mistress?" asked Mohammed.

Youssouf looked at him with an expression of dismay and anxiety.

"I mean, you love her as it beseems every faithful servant to love his mistress—you are ready to do her every service?"

"Yes, sarechsme, so do I love her," replied Youssouf, in low tones.

"Then listen! Come close to me—it is a secret. I tell you of it for your mistress's sake; reward me by letting no one know who told you."

"I swear that I will not, sarechsme!"

"Go to your mistress and tell her to have all her treasure, her gold and silver plate, and all her other valuables, put in a safe place. You probably have some such places in your cellars or vaults. It must be done quickly. Say a dream has warned you or what you will, but do not name me!"

He enveloped himself in his mantle, and hurried back to his palace, in which all was now still. The soldiers had gone out to spend the present given them by their general in joy and revelry. Mohammed was again alone in his chamber. He walked to and fro, reflecting on all he had done, with silent self-applause:

"It would have been unfortunate had he found Sitta Nefysseh's treasure. It would help him out of his difficulties. That would never do. You are falling, Cousrouf! and it is I who am hurling you down! Your peril increases with every hour! You have only to insult Sitta Nefysseh, and all Cairo will rise up in arms against you. Let that be your last deed! Then, Cousrouf, when you have fallen, you shall know who has destroyed you!—Masa, sleep quietly in your cold grave! You are being avenged!"

CHAPTER V.

A STRONG HEART.

MOHAMMED ALI'S warning to the kachef Youssouf had not been disregarded. In the secret vault, the entrance to which had been confided by Mourad Bey to his wife on his death-bed, Sitta Nefysseh's treasure now lay in security.

No one in the house knew of this vault; Sitta Nefysseh had confided it to the kachef Youssouf only, and they two had conveyed all her valuables to this hiding-place.

When all was completed, and the Sitta had retired to her apartments, Youssouf announced himself, and, upon being admitted, stepped humbly forward, fell on his knees, and handed her the keys.

She looked at him in surprise. "What does this mean? What do you bring me?"

"The keys to the vault. This one opens the inner, and the other the outer door."

"You will keep them for me, Youssouf," said his mistress, inclining her beautiful head.

"You confide them to me," said he, his countenance radiant with delight. "You wish to confide to your slave the keys to your treasure?"

"Does that surprise you?" asked she, gently. "I know I can safely confide to the kachef of my deceased husband all that I have and possess. You will keep the keys; and listen, Youssouf, should I die—"

"Die!" he exclaimed, with a cry which he found it impossible to repress. "Die!—you, Sitta Nefysseh?"

"I am mortal, as we all are, as great Mourad was!" said she, gravely. "If I should die, you will take these keys to Osman Bey Bardissi, and tell him that Sitta Nefysseh sends them to him, and that in the vault here are souvenirs for her friends. You, however, Youssouf, I make the executor of my last will; you are to distribute the souvenirs according to a list that I will give you."

She arose and took from a little closet in the wall a small book, bound with gold and richly studded with diamonds.

"This book contains the names of those to whom I wish to leave a present at my death; you will act according to the instructions contained in it, but the book itself you will keep. My initials are on it, set in splendid diamonds. It was given me by Bonaparte, the general of the Franks. Keep it, and, when you read my name, think of me!"

"Mistress, I can bear it no longer!" cried he, bursting into tears and falling on his knees. "No, I can bear it no longer! The thought of your dying robs me of all self-control. O mistress, be merciful, and do not speak of your death!"

"We have already dismissed that subject," said she, smiling. "We must be firm and brave. Youssouf must not weep like a young girl! Dry your tears, I will not see them!"

Obedient to her command, he arose and brushed the tears from his eyes. "Mistress, at your bidding my heart is strong again, and your slave awaits your commands," said he, in a firm voice.

She seemed to be struggling to regain control of herself. Youssouf's eyes rested on her in a glance of such passionate tenderness that she felt it without seeing it.

"I have a final commission to give you," said she.

"A command, mistress! You know that your slightest wish is a command for me, and would be carried out if I should die in the performance!"

"Die?" said she, with a slight start. "Now you speak of death, Youssouf. No, you shall not die! No, thoughts of death overtake us soon enough! Listen: I wish you to mount your horse and ride to Osman Bey Bardissi's camp."

"Now, mistress! No, do not require this of me!" cried he, anxiously. "You are aware an unknown friend has warned us, and said that Sitta should hide her treasure, as danger threatened her. And now you require Youssouf to leave you, him who promised his master, Mourad Bey, that he would faithfully stand beside you his life long! You cannot send me away, you will wait until the danger is past; then will I go wherever you send me, were it to the ends of the world! For you, Youssouf will rush into the arms of Death, but he cannot leave you to face danger alone. No, Sitta Nefysseh, do not require this of me!"

"I do require it of you. The message I wish to send Osman Bey is important and secret, and I can intrust it to no one but you. Within an hour, you will mount your horse, leave the city, and not rest until you are with Bardissi."

"Impossible, mistress, quite impossible! Only let me remain with you until the danger is past, then I will fly to Osman Bey, and conjure him to come with his men to protect Sitta Nefysseh."

"Youssouf, I had always supposed you were devoted and obedient to me," said she, in tones of displeasure. "You have sworn that you will be my slave, although you are a free man, and may let your beard grow. Now when I, for the first time, put your obedience to the proof, you refuse to do what I require. Is that honoring your mistress, is that fulfilling your oath? I repeat it, Kachef Youssouf, you will leave my house, and repair at once to the camp of Osman Bey Bardissi."

"That is to say, O mistress, you intend to drive me from you ; you wish to proclaim to the world that Kachef Youssouf is a faithless coward !"

"Who dare say that ?" cried she, her eyes sparkling with anger.

"Do you not suppose all the world will point their fingers at me when I return ? 'When danger threatened, he deserted his mistress,' I already hear them say ; 'he saved himself, and left her to face the danger alone.'"

"If any one should dare to speak thus, I should say, it was I who sent you away. Go, now, Kachef Youssouf. Too many words have already passed between us ; it is time you obeyed my command."

"Well, then, mistress, you command me to go, and I will go. What do you care, though you inflict profound anguish on a faithful servant, though his heart break ? What do you care, though my whole future be made miserable ? Like a heavenly vision, you float high above all human anguish and torment ; they do not touch your heart. Your heart, O mistress, is luminous like the diamond, but also cold and hard like the diamond."

"Youssouf !" cried she, in tones that made his heart leap—"Youssouf, you accuse me of being hard and cold !"

For a moment a wondrous brilliancy shone in her eyes, then she suddenly drew back from Youssouf, who stood there, motionless, in a state of ecstasy. He stood gazing at her, entranced, seeming to hear and see nothing. Not far from him, her face turned away, Sitta Nefysseh stood still. He distinctly heard her hurried breathing, and something like a low sob escape her breast. He listened to it as to mysterious and wondrously sweet music.

Suddenly, she turned around, and advanced toward him with head erect and proud bearing. "Kachef Youssouf, you have excited my indignation by your unmerited reproaches ! No one can say that Mourad Bey's widow has a cold, hard heart. Mourad Bey knew otherwise ; he knew that I loved him ; and if I have seemed, since his death, to have a cold, hard heart, it is only because I have remained true to his memory. Consider this, and do not dare to reproach me. Now go, and hasten with my message to Bardissi !"

"I am going, mistress," said he, sadly. "But, when I have executed your command, then I may return to my mistress with what speed my horse can bear me, may I not?"

She remained silent, and let her eyelids, with their long, black lashes, sink down over her beautiful eyes. It seemed to him that a sigh escaped her breast.

"No," said she, in a low voice.

"No?" shrieked, rather than cried, Youssouf. "I may not return!"

"You may not return, Kachef Youssouf. I have long recognized that it ill became a young man to pass his days here in ease and quiet, while his friends, his brothers, are confronting the enemy on the battle-field. You said it would disgrace Youssouf if he left his mistress in danger; but it seems to me that the disgrace is much greater when a youth, born perhaps to become a hero, spends his days in inglorious ease, reclining on soft cushions. Consider that Mourad Bey never laid aside his sword. Remember that, when the trumpet sounded, he was ever the first to the field. He would have considered him his enemy who should have said to him: 'Remain at home, and repose on your cushions while your brethren are facing death for the fatherland!' I think you should endeavor to follow his example. You must follow his example! Kachef Youssouf, I will tell you what is written in the letter you are to take to Osman Bey. I announce to him that I send the truest and bravest of all kachefs, and I beg him to take you to battle with him. I announce to him that I give him for the fatherland, and the most faithful friend I have, and beg him to place you at the starting-point, from which you are to run your race as a hero."

"Oh, bitterness and anguish!" cried Youssouf, in tones of despair. "She drives me from her like a miserable dog whom she will not tolerate on the threshold of her door."

"No, Youssouf," replied Sitta Nefysseh, sadly. "No! His mistress only points out to Youssouf the road he must pursue in order to become one day a hero, and the first and foremost of all the Mameluke beys. There is a higher bliss than domestic happiness, and that is the pursuit of glory. Let glory be your aim. You shall be called a hero, and the schaer shall proclaim your deeds to the listening people. And this, O Youssouf," she added in lower tones, "this is my consolation in parting with you—you," she quickly resumed, as if feeling that there had been something in the tone of her voice that required an explanation, "you whom I esteem as my husband's devoted friend! And now go, Youssouf, and let this be my farewell greeting! Think of me when you go out to battle, think that your glory is my pride!"

"I am going," said he, in a choking voice. "I am going, and to die, Sitta Nefysseh!"

"To die? No, Youssouf," cried she. "No, not to die."

"I must, for you drive me from you; you send me to confront the death-dealing bullets. Do not think that it is base fear that drives me to despair. When going with my master to battle, I have never known fear. I am going away to die; I shall seek the enemy's bullets in the hope that they graciously relieve me of my miserable existence."

"Youssouf," cried she, in tones of such pride and dignity that he started—"Youssouf, I had supposed until now that I was your mistress."

"Yes, you were my mistress until this hour; but now you drive me from you!" cried he in anguish.

"No; wherever you may be you are mine, and must obey me. You are a free man, and yet I hold you in bonds. In virtue of these bonds I command you not to seek death, but to seek renown. You are to return, a Mameluke bey. Thus must he return; thus must Sitta Nefysseh see him appear on her threshold, and then— And now," she quickly interrupted herself, "have you heard your mistress's command? You will not seek death? You swear to me that you will fight like a true soldier for fatherland and glory, and that you will not seek death? The brave do not fear death, neither do they seek it. The despairing seek death, and thereby invoke upon themselves the curse of Allah for all time. Swear to me that you will fight like a hero, and yet hold your life sacred. I, Sitta Nefysseh, your mistress, command you to do so!"

"And I will obey my mistress's command! I swear that I will struggle against my despair. I swear that I will live, to do your bidding now, and to return to hear from your lips, perhaps, a kindly word of approval. You shall be pleased with me. I will fight as beseems your servant. O Sitta Nefysseh, you are not cruel in sending me away; you are only wise and thoughtful, not cold and hard of heart, are you? You view the world with composure and wisdom. You find that Kachef Youssouf should no longer remain here in ease and inactivity, and you send him from you for his own sake. This is kind and noble on your part, and I should thank you for sending me away to perform deeds of valor, and return a Mameluke bey. This is magnanimous of you, and it was only my miserable weakness that prevented me from recognizing it, and sent foolish tears to my eyes."

He covered his face with his hands, and his head fell upon his breast. Sitta Nefysseh gazed at him intently; he did not see the expression of anguish that rested on her features. When he removed his hands from his face, she had averted her gaze, and her countenance was composed.

"Forgive me, mistress," said he, "I was a fool once more; I thought of the past, and wept over it. But I am now reconciled, and ready to go. I will do as you say; I will not seek death, but I will thank Allah if he allows it to find me. Farewell, mistress!" He fell on his knees and kissed the hem of her dress. He then stood up and rushed out of the room without looking at her again.

Sitta Nefysseh looked after him with outstretched arms, and the flood of tears which she had so long restrained burst from her eyes.

"I love him, O Allah! Thou knowest that I love him! Let him return a hero covered with glory, and then, O Allah, graciously grant that I may be able to reward him for all his love, and for all the pain I have caused him! Let Kachef Youssouf return as Youssouf the Mameluke bey, and I shall be blessed; as the master of my life will I accept him, for I love him."

A horse's hoofs ring out against the pavement of the court-yard without. A cry resounds from her lips, and she sinks down. "O Allah, watch over him! Let him return! I love him—I love him so dearly!"

CHAPTER VI.

PERSECUTION.

An hour had scarcely elapsed since Youssouf's departure when two of her maids rushed into Sitta Nefysseh's presence with anxious looks. She lay on the divan, her countenance entirely concealed, to hide her tear-stained features. She remained still, endeavoring to recover her composure. The women came nearer.

"Mistress, some one is here who wishes to speak with Sitta Nefysseh."

"Well, what is it that alarms you so?" said she, raising her head slightly, and looking at them. "Who is it that wishes to speak with me?"

"O mistress," murmured one of them, "it is the cadi with four of the police."

Sitta Nefysseh sprang to her feet.

"What say you? The chief of the police dares to enter my house! What does he want?"

"He says he comes at the instance of his highness the viceroy."

"If that is the case," said Sitta Nefysseh, quietly, "let him enter." One of the women opened the door, and the cadi, the chief of police, appeared on the threshold; behind him stood four policemen, with pistols and daggers in their belts, their hands on their swords.

"Were my women right?" asked Sitta Nefysseh, with dignity. "You come in the name of his highness the viceroy?"

"Yes," replied the cadi, with a slight bow. "Yes, I come in his highness's name. The viceroy commands that Mourad Bey's widow accompany me at once to his presence, to the citadel."

"And with what right?" asked she quietly.

"I know not and care not," said the official, with an air of indifference; "here is the order." He drew from his pocket a document, to which large seals were appended, and handed it to her. Sitta Nefysseh looked at it, and returned it with perfect composure.

"You are right, it is the viceroy's order. I will obey. Order the carriage to be driven to the door."

She said this in such imperious tones that the cadi, at other times a proud man, and a high dignitary of the viceroy's court, could not but obey her, and stepped out and delivered her command to one of his officers. He then returned to Sitta Nefysseh.

"I have orders to leave a guard in your house," said he.

"Then do so," said she, quietly. "The viceroy is master over us all, and it seems there is no law here in Cairo but his will. Obey him, therefore. Leave a guard in my house."

He seemed not to notice the mockery in her words, and bowed in silence.

"No one may enter or leave your house during your absence."

"Why do you say this to me? Say it to those who may desire to leave it after I have gone, and who may be alarmed. I am not alarmed; my conscience does not accuse me. My carriage is ready—let us go. I trust, however, that the viceroy does not require me to appear before him alone; it is becoming that Mourad's Bey's widow should be accompanied by her women when she goes out."

"I am not instructed to refuse such a request; yet, there must not be more of them than your carriage will contain."

"Two of my servants will accompany me," said she. Without once looking back into the room, or manifesting any fear or anxiety whatever, she stepped out into the vestibule, and, beckoning to two of the weeping women who had assembled about her, commanded them to follow her. "You others need fear nothing," said she with perfect composure. "The cadi leaves his guards here to protect you, against whom I know not, but certainly against some one." Taking leave of her servants with a kindly nod, and drawing her veil more closely about her, she walked proudly out into the court-yard to the carriage.

Almost ashamed of his errand, the cadi followed and assisted her in entering the carriage, closing the door after her. The carriage drove off rapidly, accompanied by the cadi and his officers, while another body of men remained in charge of the house.

Sitta Nefysseh leaned back against the cushions while the carriage rolled through the streets, her thoughts far distant from her present surroundings.

"I thank thee, Allah, that he is saved!" she murmured to herself. "I thank thee! He would have been excited to ungovernable wrath, and he would have been punished and imprisoned as a rebel. I have saved him! What have I now to fear? Let the worst befall, provided only that he be safe?"

The carriage moved slowly up the Muskj Street, through dense crowds of people. It was market-day, and the street was thronged with people, who complained so loudly of the intruding carriage and horsemen that Sitta Nefysseh, aroused from her meditations, leaned forward and drew the window-curtains aside. The people, who in their wrath had not observed that the cadi and his officers constituted the escort of the carriage, now became silent as they saw the woman at the window, and peered in with curiosity.

Sitta Nefysseh raised her veil and displayed her countenance to the multitude. "It is Sitta Nefysseh, Mourad Bey's widow!" resounded in the street. The cry was repeated until the gaze of all became fixed on the carriage in astonishment. "What does it mean?"

Buying and selling were no longer thought of. The people followed the carriage, which moved slowly through the crowded street toward the viceroy's citadel, in dense masses. It was in vain that the cadi ordered them to disperse; in vain that the officers threatened them with drawn swords. They only pressed on in denser masses, increased by the people who came flocking from their houses to see Mourad Bey's widow, who sat tranquilly in the carriage with her two women. Their destination was at last reached, and the gates of the citadel closed behind them. The people who had accompanied the carriage remained without, yelling and shrieking: "Sitta Nefysseh is imprisoned—let us liberate her!"

Sitta Nefysseh had left her carriage, and was now following the cadi, who walked in advance. Behind her came the two women, followed by the officers. Thus the procession moved in profound silence up the broad stairway and into the grand reception-saloon.

"Be kind enough to wait here a moment," said the cadi.

He walked into the next apartment. Sitta Nefysseh, who had again covered her face with her veil, stood proudly erect in the midst of the saloon. The two weeping women stepped nearer to their mistress, and asked if danger threatened her, and begged to be permitted to accompany her everywhere.

"Be still!" said Sitta, in low tones. "Shed no tears. These men must not have the satisfaction of seeing us appear cowardly and weak."

The cadi now returned and stood at the threshold, holding the velvet curtain aside.

"Be kind enough to enter, Sitta Nefysseh."

"Not alone. My women will accompany me."

"No, they are to remain here. You alone are to enter. The women will await your return here."

Sitta Nefysseh walked proudly into the next apartment. The curtain fell back behind her. Cousrouf, who lay stretched out on his silken cushions, smoking his chibouque, looked up at her through the clouds of smoke that enveloped him as she entered the room. She looked at him composedly, and remained standing at the door with so proud and dignified a bearing, such majesty in her whole appearance, that Cousrouf's insolence could not but succumb. He arose and advanced to meet her.

"I salute you, Sitta Nefysseh, widow of Mourad Bey!"

"I do not return your salutation. I have been conducted here from my house in an insulting manner, and I am now surprised to find that his highness seems only to have had me brought here in order to salute me."

"I did not call you in order to salute you, but for an entirely different purpose," replied Cousrouf. "Seat yourself on the ottoman beside me, and let us converse."

"Converse, highness? Friends and confidants sit down to converse with each other, but unfortunately we are neither," replied she, composedly, as she seated herself on the ottoman with the dignity of a princess. Cousrouf remaining standing, Sitta Nefysseh raised her hand and pointed to the divan. "To the viceroy belongs the seat of honor. I beg your highness to take that seat."

He bowed slightly, and took the seat assigned him.

"I wished to beg Sitta Nefysseh's permission to seat myself at her side, to converse with her as a friend. You do not desire it, however—you wish to see in me the prince only. Let it be so. I am only the viceroy, and I have summoned you to appear before me."

"Summoned, you call it?" cried she, passionately. "I call it being dragged here in a disgraceful manner!"

"Compose yourself, Sitta Nefysseh; let us converse calmly. I have grave reproaches to make."

"Against me?" asked she, in astonishment.

"Yes, serious, grave reproaches! You are of the opinion, are you not, that every mistress is responsible for the actions of her servants?"

"I am, because, if one has bad and faithless servants, he should discharge them. Yes, it seems to me a master is responsible for his servants' actions."

"And therefore have I summoned you to this audience. Do you know what your kachef Youssouf has done?"

Sitta Nefysseh trembled. It was fortunate that her veil concealed her features, and that Cousrouf could not see the deathly pallor that overspread her cheeks.

"My kachef?" said she, with forced composure. "Of what is he accused?"

"He is accused of attempting to bribe my soldiers, and incite them to revolt and treason."

"That is not true!" exclaimed she, passionately. "That is a falsehood, and I tell you so to your face! My words are true. My kachef has never done such things; he is incapable of inciting any one to a breach of faith or to treason. He is the truest and best of my servants."

"And yet it is true. Your kachef has incited my soldiers to treason. The viceroy says it is true!" cried Cousrouf. "Youssouf attempted to corrupt one of my own soldiers, an Armenian, urging him to go over to Osman Bardissi. When the soldier refused, he promised to give him the same pay he now receives from me."

"Highness, that is not true, I swear it is not!"

"Here is the proof!" answered Cousrouf, rising to his feet and taking from the table a paper, which he unfolded. "Here is the proof! Here it is, plainly written in his own handwriting! Herein your kachef Youssouf promises my soldier, Sadok Aga, to give him his whole pay, and even double the amount, if he will undertake to ride to Bardissi's camp and convey a letter to the bey. Here it is in his own handwriting, and signed by him."

"Highness, I beg you to let me see the writing," said Nefysseh, extending her hand to take the paper. "Let me see it; I can read."

Cousrouf did not comply with her request. He folded the paper, and laid it on the table again.

"It is unnecessary that you should read it. I insist that your kachef endeavors to corrupt my soldiers and induce them to desert to Bardissi's camp. This is clearly treason. As you yourself admit that a mistress is responsible for her servant's actions, I declare and shall hold you, Sitta Nefysseh, responsible for your servant's crime."

"That you cannot do, highness! Youssouf is no longer my servant, is no longer in my house. I have discharged him, not because I thought ill of him, not because I desired to punish him, but because I esteem him, because I know he was created for something better than to be only the servant of a woman. I discharged him because his courage and nobility of soul urged him to draw the sword and go out to battle. He has gone to Bardissi's camp to serve in the ranks of his Mamelukes."

"That is to say," cried Cousrouf, in angry tones—"that is to say, Sitta Nefysseh, Mourad Bey's widow raises soldiers in her house for the army of our enemy!"

"Could your highness expect Mourad Bey's—the Mameluke chieftain's—widow to raise soldiers for the enemies of her deceased husband?" asked she, throwing her head back proudly. "Yet let me remark this: my expression was badly chosen. Sitta Nefysseh does not occupy herself with raising soldiers. Youssouf was brought up by my husband, and has remained in my house these few years since his death. He had grown weary of the effeminate life he was leading, and begged to be discharged from my service. I did as he requested. I am not his mother, not his sister, and not his relative. He is a freeman, and puts his freedom to the best use. But I tell you that he is not guilty of the charge you make against him—he never wrote that paper. And do you know why not, Cousrouf? Because he does not know how to write. He is a warrior, and only knows how to write indelible characters on the faces of his enemies with his sword; and, believe me, I should recognize these characters if they were inscribed on your face—I should recognize the handwriting of my kachef; but the characters on that paper are not his."

"Truly, Sitta Nefysseh, your audacity is great!" cried Cousrouf.

"But, it seems to me, yours is far greater; forgive me for saying so, highness. Man and woman we stand before each other, and you have publicly branded the woman, who is conscious of no shame, with disgrace."

"How can you make such a charge against me? What is it that I have done? You yourself acknowledge that the master is justly responsible for his servants' actions, and I repeat it: your kachef has endeavored to draw my soldiers from their allegiance, to corrupt them. I have accused you of nothing else."

"Yes, you have more than accused me of other crimes!" cried she, throwing back her veil, her eyes sparkling with indignation. "Look at me! In me, you have put the woman, put Mourad Bey's widow to shame. You have caused me to be brought from my house by policemen. That is to say, you have insulted, in me, womanly virtue and honor!"

"How so?" asked Cousrouf, in astonishment.

"Do you know so little of the customs of our land? You, the Viceroy of Egypt, do not know that, when women are led through the street by the police, it is equivalent to branding them as lost to all shame; that they are delivered over to the police to be punished by being conducted through the public streets, to the disgrace of their entire sex!"

"You go too far," replied the viceroy. "I did cause you to be conducted here. I sent to you one of the first dignitaries of my court, the cadi; I did this to honor you. To be thus conducted by the cadi through the street is not disgraceful, as in the case of the women you speak of. In your own carriage you were escorted by the cadi and his servants, and your good name and honor, which I respect in common with all the world, cannot have suffered thereby. Yet your conduct has been culpable, you are responsible for your kachef's deeds; and through him I accuse you of treason, and you, Nefysseh, must suffer for your servant's crime."

"Then, take my life, if that will benefit you," said she, quietly. "I have nothing to give you but that. If you take my life, you will be accused of murder, and, believe, this accusation will be heard by all Cairo. I have nothing more to say. Deal with me as you think proper."

"You challenge my enmity, you shall have it! It were wise on your part to beg me to pardon Youssouf, to withdraw the accusation, and to declare yourself ready to pay the required sum to my soldiers."

"Where is Mourad Bey's widow to obtain the money? Your men have remained in my house, let them search for treasure there. Let them take what they find. Mourad's widow is poor, and your endeavor is vain. You will find nothing of value in my house; long wars have made Mourad's widow poor. And, if I had money, I would rather cast it into the Nile, than to give it to the enemies of my husband!—Now I have spoken and relieved my heart. Now do with me as you think proper, Cousrouf. This I will, however, repeat, my kachef Youssouf did not write the characters on that paper. He is not capable of corrupting men from their allegiance. Do you desire my life? If so, take it! But if you venture to do so, prepare yourself to meet all Cairo in insurrection. Allah is just! You will then see all Cairo, held by you in fetters until now, rise up and burst its bonds, and shake its mane in lion-like wrath."

"We shall see if our lion really rises in its wrath, when I, as I am in duty bound, do justice to those who have done wrong and committed crimes!"

He arose from his divan, stepped to the door, and called one of his servants. In answer to his call, a servant hastened into the room.

"Conduct Sitta Nefysseh to the house of Sheik Hesseyni, who lives in the old citadel; tell him to guard her well, and not to allow any one to see her."

"Tell him, cadi," said Nefysseh, quietly, "tell him to guard me as every jailor guards his prisoner; that is the true meaning of the viceroy's words. Farewell, Cousrouf—I am going to my prison! May your conscience reproach you as little as mine does me! Farewell!"

She drew her veil over her countenance, and slowly left the apartment. At the door sat her two women weeping and sobbing. She commanded them to follow her, and walked on as composedly as if she were the princess of this palace. She swept down the marble stairway to her carriage, as if about to take a drive.

"Sitta Nefysseh, it will not be necessary to enter your carriage," said the cadi, who had followed her. "We shall only have to pass through that little side-door to be in the sheik's house."

"Ah, you desire to prevent the people, who are calling so loudly after me, from seeing me in my degradation, or rather the degradation of those who tread law and propriety under foot in their treatment of me."

"Sitta Nefysseh, I know nothing of the charges made against you," replied the cadi, gruffly. "I obey the orders of the viceroy; the rest does not concern me."

"That is certainly the most convenient course," said she, derisively, and quietly submitting when he took hold of her arm and led her across the court to the little gate in the wall. The women followed her. Their tears no longer flowed, and they seemed to consider themselves happy in being at least allowed to accompany their mistress.

Dense masses of people still stood without. They called loudly for Sitta Nefysseh, swearing by Allah that they would not leave until she should be released. But what can the poor, defenceless people do when confronted by armed soldiers, ready to fire destructive volleys among them? What can they do but sullenly retire under such circumstances? This they now did. About the citadel quiet now reigned, but the streets below were still thronged with dense crowds, from out whose midst the cries continually resounded: "Sitta Nefysseh has been arrested! She has been shamefully conducted through the streets to the citadel by the police! She has been publicly insulted! She, the noblest of women, is accused of a great crime!"

When night came, the excitement and fury of the populace had not yet subsided. Early on the morning of the following day, dense masses of people surged to the house where Hesseyni, the chief sheik of the city, resided, and demanded with loud clamors that he should liberate Sitta Nefysseh.

The sheik had given serious consideration to this difficult and embarrassing case, and, before the people forced an entrance, had already determined to comply with their demands.

In solemn procession, their green turbans on their heads, and enveloped in their long flowing caftans, with their costly ermine collars, the entire body of sheiks repaired on foot to the palace. With grave and solemn bearing, these representatives of public justice demanded that they should be conducted to the viceroy's presence.

He received them in his apartment, advancing to meet them with a kindly greeting.

"What do you desire, friends? You know I am always glad to hear the wishes of the people as pronounced by you, their representatives."

"Then listen to these wishes, highness!" said one of the sheiks. "The people, and we with them, desire that Sitta Nefysseh, who was yesterday forcibly taken from her house, be permitted to return to the same. Her house has been shamefully ill-used, Cousrouf Pacha! Your police have treated it like the house of an enemy. Nothing has remained in its place; every thing is overturned and thrown about. They were looking for treasure, highness, and they found nothing. Sitta Nefysseh was considered rich, and that was perhaps her crime; or will your highness be kind enough to inform us if Sitta Nefysseh is accused of any other crime!"

"She is," replied Cousrouf. "She is accused of the most shameful of all crimes. Her kachef attempted to corrupt one of my soldiers, offering him double pay if he would desert to the army of the rebellious Mamelukes."

"Is that proven, highness?" asked the sheik.

"It is proven! I possess written proof of the fact. Here it is; read it for yourselves. This attempt has excited the just wrath of my good soldiers. Believe it was in order to protect Sitta Nefysseh from the fury of my soldiers that I called her here. I repeat it, Sitta Nefysseh, Mourad Bey's widow, has endeavored to corrupt, and has offered my soldiers double pay. She is now in my power, and I will punish her; yet, I will be merciful on your account. Let her do as she offered—let her give my soldiers their pay, and her offence shall be overlooked this time."

"That would be a punishment not prescribed by law," replied the sheik, quietly. "If Sitta Nefysseh is really guilty of the crime of which you accuse her, she is indeed very culpable, highness; but she can not atone for it with money. Her guilt must, however, be proven; and it devolves upon us, the representatives of public justice, to consider and determine whether Sitta Nefysseh is guilty or not."

"Does not my word suffice?" cried Cousrouf, passionately. "I tell you that she is guilty, that I have proof of her guilt, and I declare that this suffices. I repeat what I have said, if she pays my soldiers she is free."

"That does not suffice!" replied the sheik. "We must first know whether Sitta Nefysseh confesses herself guilty. In accordance with the law and with your permission, highness, let two of the sheiks go to Sitta Nefysseh and ask her if she confesses herself guilty; and, further, what she has to say in her defence. This is just, and this must be done."

"Do as you say. Go to her. But her own declaration of her innocence will not suffice for me. She must have as much proof of her innocence as I have of her guilt. Go to Sitta Nefysseh. You will find her in the house of Sheik Hesseyni."

With a profound bow the sheiks withdrew from the viceroy's apartment and repaired to the house of Sheik Hesseyni.

Sitta Nefysseh greeted the cadis and sheiks with profound deference and perfect composure.

"I see," said she, gently, "you believe in my innocence, and know that Sitta Nefysseh is guilty of no crime, and has been unjustly covered with shame."

"We well know that you have committed no crime," said the sheik. "The viceroy, however, accuses you of having attempted to corrupt his soldiers through your kachef; tell us, is this true?"

"You well know that it is not true! Why should I do it, and how could I be so foolish as to attempt such a thing? I give you my word, I swear by the memory of Mourad Bey, I am innocent of the crime of which I am accused. I have not attempted to corrupt the soldiers of Cousrouf Pacha, nor have I authorized my kachef to do so. Believe me, I speak the truth. But, tell me, was that all the viceroy said? I think I see through his plans, and understand this accusation. Did he not name the punishment he intended to inflict on me?"

"He did. You are to be set at liberty as soon as you pay his soldiers—what he maintains you promised—their double pay."

"Is it not as I said?" cried she, in derisive tones. "Cousrouf Pacha wants money! He has heard stories of my wealth, and believes me rich; and now, relying on a woman's timidity, he endeavors to extort money from me. He wants money, and therefore makes this shameful charge. Go, I beg you, to the viceroy, and tell him Mourad's widow is poor, and has nothing with which to appease his rapacity. Let him take my life if he will. I am innocent, and if he causes me to be put to death, I shall charge him with murder at Allah's footstool! I have nothing else to give him. Let him deal with me as he thinks proper."

"We will tell him all you say, for you are in the right, Sitta Nefysseh," replied the sheik. "And if you possessed all the wealth of Egypt, with the millions that lie buried in its deserts, you would be justified in secreting them from the tyranny and fraud that seek to extort from you your property. We will therefore defend you to the best of our ability.—Come, sheiks, let us return to the viceroy."

They repaired to the citadel, and told the viceroy what had passed.

"She is really poor, highness," said the cadi. "She declares her innocence. She does not possess the treasure you speak of, and therefore she can not comply with your demands. Her house has been searched through, and, as you are aware, nothing has been found."

"No, nothing has been found," said the viceroy to himself, stepping back and walking thoughtfully to and fro. "A fearful thought occurs to me! Mohammed Ali may have advised me to take this step with an evil purpose, seeking my destruction. He hates me in his heart! I was a fool to allow myself to be persuaded to stretch out my hand after this woman's wealth. But I will be avenged on Mohammed! However, having once embarked in this undertaking, I will at least endeavor to withdraw from it creditably. I must give myself the appearance of still believing in Sitta Nefysseh's guilt."

He turned to the sheiks, who were awaiting his decision in respectful silence. In haughty terms he declined to admit that he had been deceived, and that Sitta Nefysseh was innocent.

"The accused must be punished!" cried Cousrouf, in loud and threatening tones.

The cadi drew himself up and gazed firmly at the viceroy.

"Highness, our patience is now at an end. We have sought to obtain justice by peaceful entreaties. You refuse it, and your refusal is an insult to us, the servants of our holy religion, and the representatives of the people. Here, we have therefore nothing more to say or to do. Nothing is left us but to depart and repair to the mosque of El-Azar, where the head of the martyr Sel-Kosyn is buried. There we will gather the people about us and decide as justice shall require.—Come, ye sheiks, let us go to the mosque!"

"Do so!" cried Cousrouf, haughtily. "But, let me tell you this: if you excite the people to revolt, my cannon shall thunder among you! You will be responsible for the consequences."

They made no reply, but turned and left the apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

MONEY! PAY!

WITHOUT in the vestibule they met Mustapha, the guardian of the revenues of the holy temple of Mecca. Beside him stood several of the leading citizens of Cairo. They had come to settle amicably, if possible, the grave difficulty between the viceroy and the sheiks.

"Do not let it come to extremes, cadi," said the *oualy*, in warning tones. "You know the viceroy is very powerful, and his fierce soldiers take delight in slaughter."

"No, do not let it come to extremes," said the others, joining in his entreaty. "Consider that they are strong, and we are weak."

"No we are strong, for we are in the right," said the cadi. "We cannot allow justice to be set at defiance, and the noblest of the women of Cairo to be shamefully insulted. The people look to us, their representatives, to protect them, and woe to us if we fail to discharge our duty! Come, let us to the mosque, and there render to the people an account of what we have done."

"Do this at your peril!" cried Mustapha. "O cadi, the viceroy is resolute and defies us with his troops. Let me at least make an attempt to settle the matter peaceably."

"Let him do so," cried the others. At last, the cadi consented to wait until the oualy should have seen the viceroy.

"If he liberates Sitta Nefysseh, and allows you to conduct her through the streets, will you be satisfied?"

"Not satisfied, but we will demand nothing more," said the cadi, "although the viceroy should be required to confess, publicly, that the accusation is unjust."

"That is too much. This the viceroy cannot and will not do," cried the oualy. "Be contented if he sets the Sitta at liberty, and allows you to show her to the people."

"But we demand, in addition," said the cadi, "that he withdraw his police from her house."

"That he has already done," said the oualy, smiling. "Not finding what they sought, the soldiers have quietly withdrawn."

"Then I shall go at once to the viceroy, and endeavor to soften his severity," cried Mustapha Aga. "Await my return here."

Mustapha hastened to the viceroy's apartment. In a few minutes he returned, his countenance radiant with delight.

"Ye men, the viceroy has graciously accorded what we demand, and you are to conduct the Sitta in triumph through the city. What, cadi! you receive this intelligence calmly and gloomily?"

"The times are gloomy and lowering," said the cadi. "That the viceroy sets the Sitta at liberty proves only that he had no right to arrest her, and that the viceroy does right or wrong at his own pleasure. That saddens me. Come, let us go after Sitta Nefysseh."

"Wait a moment," said Mustapha. "The viceroy annexes a little condition to his consent."

"I thought so," said the cadi, quietly.

"The viceroy requires that the Sitta shall not return to her house, as he has been informed that she often receives the visits of the Mameluke chieftains there. Her house is in the outskirts of the city, and it is difficult to observe those who enter and leave it. It is peculiarly accessible to the enemy, and the viceroy therefore requires that Sitta Nefysseh shall no longer reside there, but in the house of Sheik Sadat. She cannot refuse to do this."

"And she will not," said Sheik Sadat. "No, she will not refuse to honor the abode of her old friend with her presence. Come, let us go."

They then repaired at once to the house of Sheik Hesseyni, who, already informed of what had taken place, came forward to meet them, leading Sitta Nefysseh. She extended her hand to the cadi, and then turned to Sadat:

"Will you receive me into your dwelling? Will you extend your hospitality to the poor woman who has been driven from her own home?"

"Welcome to my house, Sitta!" cried Sadat. "It seems to me that with you my noble friend Mourad Bey will also cross my threshold once more. Your presence in my humble house will do me great honor. How delighted my wives will be to receive you!"

The people had again assembled in front of the gates of the citadel. As these were now opened, and Sitta Nefysseh appeared coming toward them in the midst of her escort, the people recognized her queenly figure and bearing, although her face was veiled. Shouts of delight rent the air. "Long live Sitta Nefysseh, and the cadi! Praised be Allah that we have a cadi who enforces our rights!"

Cousrouf sat on his divan in his apartment. He heard this cry, and muttered between his teeth, "These rebels shall pay for this!"

The shouting populace conducted Sitta Nefysseh in triumph through the streets. The cadi was loudly applauded, and the viceroy derided.

These shouts were not only heard by the viceroy, but also by Mohammed Ali in his silent chamber, and they brought a smile to his lips. He had stayed in his apartments all day, and had also commanded his soldiers to remain in their quarters.

"It works well," said he to himself. "These shouts show how good was the advice I gave him. Shrewd as you are, Cousrouf, you are beaten at your own game. The people are contented to know you, enthroned in the citadel. They dreamed of happiness and peace, and called you a just ruler. I have opened their eyes. To-day, they know Cousrouf to be an unjust ruler, and love him no longer. You enraged them most when you dared to insult the woman who is most honored in Cairo. From this moment, not only the men, but, what is far worse, the women, are arrayed against you."

He had risen and was walking to and fro in his apartment.

From time to time he stopped at the window to listen to the cries that resounded from the streets, and then resumed his walking.

"What curses good Cousrouf must be invoking upon my head at this moment! He will have discovered by this time that his good friend Mohammed still somewhat resembles the 'insolent lad,' as he always called him, of Cavalla. You have schooled me well, Cousrouf; you have converted the insolent lad into a lion who wears the skin of a fox. You were pleased with the fox, stroked his fur, and called him your devoted servant. But, only wait, the fox-skin will soon fall to the ground and disclose the lion ready to destroy you. Yes," continued he, "wait but a few days longer, and this transformation shall take place. It must take place. The week will soon have elapsed, and then Bardissi must have my answer. Cousrouf shall hear it and quake in his citadel. Every thing is ready, and my new friends shall soon hear from me."

Suddenly he stopped before the window and listened attentively. Fierce and savage cries had succeeded the shouts of joy. The voices of women and children were now hushed, and the hoarse tones of men only could be heard. He hastily stepped back from the window. No, he must not be seen. If seen, he might be called and compelled to join in the movement against his will, and the time has not yet come. He must still wait.

He stood still in the middle of the room, and listened to the uproar that came.

"This is revolt! These are soldiers!" said he to himself, stepping to the door of the antechamber, and beckoning to a slave. "What is the meaning of this uproar?"

"I know not, sarechsme. Shall I go down to inquire?"

"Go down, mingle with the crowd, and find out what it means, and then return to me as quickly as possible."

The Nubian hastened to do his master's bidding. Mohammed continued to walk to and fro. The uproar, as it came nearer, had become intelligible.

"We want money! Give us bread! We are hungry, and must have our pay!"

Such were the savage cries that resounded from the street below.

"Ah, I understand," said Mohammed to himself; "these are Taher Pacha's soldiers! He has marched with them into the city, to begin the work on his own account; Taher is ambitious, and wants the viceroy's throne. He begins the work of rebellion for himself, he will end it for me; though I can as yet take no active part in it! O Sitta Nefysseh, you have brought me a step nearer to the throne, and Taher is advancing me another. Wait, Mohammed, only wait."

The Nubian returned and announced that a revolt had broken out among Taher Pacha's soldiers. They had gone to the citadel, and savagely demanded their pay. The viceroy had received a deputation sent by them, and told them to go to the defterdar, and demand payment of him in the viceroy's name. In accordance with this demand, the soldiers had then repaired to the house of the defterdar, and had, upon admission being denied them, broken down the doors. The minister of finance, however, rid himself of them by telling them to demand their pay of Mohammed Ali, who had a few days before received ten purses of gold from the viceroy for the payment of the troops.

"And now the soldiers have come here," said the Nubian, in deferential, anxious tones. "They have surrounded the house, and demand their pay. They are furious, and swear by Allah and the prophet that they will not rest until they have received the money due them. They complain, too, of being sent from house to house like beggars."

"The poor fellows are right," said Mohammed.

Fierce cries now resounded from below:

"We will not be trodden under foot like dogs! We are no beggars! Give us our pay, Mohammed Ali! The defterdar sends us to you! You have our money, and we want it!"

He sprang to the window, tore it open, and, in tones that were heard above the uproar, commanded silence.

"The defterdar has deceived you. I have no money! I will come down to you."

He quickly stepped back from the window, and laid the sword, dagger, and pistols, that hung in his belt, on the table.

"They shall see that I am not alarmed. I will go down to them unarmed."

No, Mohammed Ali is not alarmed, they all perceive as he appears among them unarmed, and motions the soldiers, that are rushing upon him, back, with a wave of the hand.

"Stand back, soldiers, and do not forget that I am the sarechsme. Not your general, but yet, like you, in the viceroy's service."

"Does he also pay you as he does us?" asked a soldier, in mocking tones. "Do they also give you empty promises instead of money?"

"That is an insolent question," said he. "I will, however, answer it, because I choose to do so. They do not pay me. They gave the sarechsme, after he had waited in vain for many months, ten purses of gold; they owe him more. Ask my soldiers what I did with this money. I shared it with my soldiers as a general should. I retained five purses, for this amount was due my creditors. The other five purses I gave to my soldiers—not as their pay, the viceroy owes them that, but as a present from me. I have received no other money—I swear to this by Allah and the prophet. Go to my soldiers and ask them if this is not true, and then do as you think proper."

"Long live Mohammed Ali! Long live the generous sarechsme!" cried one of the soldiers, and the cry was taken up and repeated by all the rest.

"It is needless to go to the soldiers, for the sarechsme tells the truth. Let us return to the defterdar; he must and shall pay us!"

The revolting soldiers surged on up the street. Mohammed, however, returned to his solitary apartments with a clearer brow and a more derisive smile on his lips:

"This was well done, and can tend only to my advantage. Taher Pacha will not be much pleased, either, when his soldiers tell him of the presents made by me to mine. The waves are surging higher and higher, but I see the boat in which I am to ride over them safely. The golden oars only are wanting, but I shall find them, too!"

He called the Nubian, and commanded him to tell his bim bashis he desired to see them. And when they came he conversed with them for a long time, and gave them his orders. The soldiers were to remain quietly in their quarters, and not to mingle with the revolters.

"Wait quietly for three hours, and, if you receive no message from me by that time, bim bashis, you may allow the soldiers to go out and satisfy their curiosity. Now go and wait until then."

The insurgents had again repaired to the house of the defterdar, situated on the square of the Esbekieh.

For the second time they fiercely demanded money, and called for the defterdar with such savage cries that he was compelled to show himself.

Deathly pale, and trembling in every limb, he came out upon the balcony of the second story, bowed in every direction, and begged the soldiers to listen to him. The uproar subsided for a moment. He entreated them to be patient for a few days, promising to procure money for them, to have it brought from Alexandria to meet their just demands.

"No!" cried one of the soldiers, raising his fist threateningly, "we have waited long enough, and will wait no longer! We are hungry. Pay us!"

"No!" cried another, "we will wait no longer! If the defterdar does not pay up we will tear him to pieces, and pay ourselves with his flesh!"

"Let us surround his house, and keep him prisoner until he gives us our pay!" yelled the soldiers, as they scaled the garden-wall and surrounded the house.

The terrified defterdar sent a messenger through a secret passage into the street, to convey intelligence of what had happened to the viceroy.

"Have pity on your defterdar, highness. The soldiers have broken into his house, and he is in their power. Help me! Subdue the revolt by paying the soldiers!"

Cousrouf received this intelligence with wrath.

"Are all the devils let loose? Hardly have I been compelled to liberate this insolent woman, when I am defied by rebellious soldiers. They shall be taught that I am master, and that to threaten me is to destroy themselves. Let the artillerists stand by their guns, with burning fuses, and await my orders! Let the soldiers be drawn up around the fortress with loaded muskets! And you, messenger, go back to your master, and tell him to send the rebels to me. I will give them the reception they deserve."

The messenger returned by the same secret passage to his master, and delivered the viceroy's message, and the delighted defterdar presented himself on the balcony once more.

"Go to the citadel, to the viceroy, he will receive you, and give you your money; I have none!"

"Allah il Allah!" cried the soldiers. "The viceroy is a great man! He will deal justly with us!"

The dense masses of rebels surged up the Muskj Street toward the citadel. They have reached their destination. There stands the citadel. But what does this mean? The gates are closed. "The viceroy has sent for us; we wish to see him to demand our pay!" Suddenly the guns of the fortress hurl their deadly contents among them. "We are betrayed! They are murdering us!" yell the infuriated rebels, drawing their ataghans, and rushing upon the Turkish soldiers who are endeavoring to drive them from the citadel, fighting them man to man. And now the three hours have elapsed, and new masses of soldiers are storming up the height! These are Mohammed Ali's troops, now let loose! Like the others, they clamor for pay, and, like the others, they rush upon the Turkish soldiers. The revolt is now general.

Taher Pacha, as well as Mohammed Ali, hears it; but the latter remains quietly in his room. Taher Pacha, less discreet, hastens forth to suppress, or, if the prospect seems favorable, to encourage the revolt. He repairs to the citadel and sends the viceroy word that he desires an audience.

"Tell his highness I wish to restore the city to tranquillity; and, if possible, appease the soldiers."

The messenger soon returns with a dejected look. "It is in vain, general, in vain! His highness desires no peaceful settlement. He says he will make no compromise with rebels! You are to return to your house; he says he can dispose of these rebels without any assistance!"

"Is that his opinion?" asked Taher, bowing profoundly. "The wisdom of the viceroy is inscrutable. I retire, as he commands."

He hastily quitted the apartment, went down to his soldiers and called his bim bashis to his side.

"I was with his highness, and endeavored to settle this difficulty without further bloodshed. But he declined, and said there could be no settlement between you and him except at the cannon's mouth, and that he would pay you with your own blood!"

The soldiers answered their general's words with a fierce roar; when this at last subsided, he continued: "The viceroy says the defterdar is to pay you—that you must look to him. Let us do so, soldiers! Let us compel him to pay!"

"Yes, he shall pay us!" cried they; and the wild masses again rushed to the house of the defterdar.

The closed gates are torn asunder; and Taher Pacha's Armenians and Mohammed Ali's Albanians run with savage cries into the house.

"I have no money!" cries the defterdar, with pale, trembling lips.

"Where are your books, your accounts? We will take you, together with your books, to our general."

"Do so, do so!" groaned the defterdar, pointing to his books. "Take me, with my books, to Taher Pacha."

Onward the wild mass surged with their prisoner and his accounts.

They passed the house of Mohammed Ali, who stood at the window, and looked down at them with a smile of satisfaction.

"The revolt is firmly established; Taher Pacha is at its head, and we shall see how he conducts the matter."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INSURRECTION.

FROM the citadel the thunder of the artillery and the fierce shouts of the people still resounded. Mohammed heard the uproar throughout the entire night. The soldiers continually pressed forward to replace their comrades shot down by the murderous volleys from the fortress.

Mohammed remained quietly in his house. True, his soldiers have joined the rebels, but who can hold him responsible, and why should he expose himself to the danger of being refused obedience should he demand it of them?

Taher Pacha thinks differently. During the night he had examined the books of the defterdar, held a prisoner in his house, and had been compelled to admit that he was innocent, and had no money with which to pay off the soldiers.

On the following morning he announced to his soldiers that the defterdar was innocent, and the viceroy alone guilty. He had accumulated and possessed money and treasure, and could pay the soldiers if he would. He had, however, determined to keep for himself all the money sent from Stamboul for the troops.

The intelligence rapidly spreads among the soldiers that Cousrouf has money, and can pay if he will.

"And pay he shall!" cries Taher Pacha. "I will march with you into his stronghold. Woe to him; he has begun this work of slaughter, and must take the consequences!"

The gates are closed and barred. What care the soldiers, encouraged by their general's approach, for that? "The walls can be scaled!" No sooner said than done. Like cats, the first climb over the high wall, and the rest follow. The guards within are overpowered, and the gates are thrown open. And now all rush in intent on victory, and, above all, on obtaining money.

The viceroy's *khaznadar* advances to meet them with a body of soldiers. Taher Pacha calls on him to surrender. The coward obeys, and lays down his arms. Cousrouf sits quietly in his apartment, little dreaming of what has taken place.

"Let them fight on ; in a short time these rebels and traitors will yield, and sue for mercy. I will have their heads severed from their bodies, and sent to Stamboul as trophies of victory ! "

But what does this strange noise mean ?

A volley resounds from beneath Cousrouf's windows.

A Nubian rushes into his apartment, and announces, in tones of dismay : "You are betrayed, the khaznadar has surrendered, and the rebels are storming the palace."

Cousrouf bounds from his seat, hurls from him his chibouque, and quickly girds on his sword.

"We will hurl them back. Let Mohammed Ali come with his troops. He will vanquish them and overthrow the traitor, Taher Pacha. Right royally shall Mohammed Ali be rewarded if he comes to my assistance ; and come he will. He is at least no traitor, and will never make common cause with rebels. You, my Nubians, my body-guard, my brave followers, ascend to the battlement and turn the guns upon the rebels who surround us."

They obey his command, and their guns are soon thundering down into the ranks of the rebels.

Mohammed does not come to the viceroy's assistance ; he is ill, and has been confined to his room ever since Taher Pacha has been besieging the citadel with his soldiers. Nor will his illness permit him to leave the house now, and his servant announces to all comers and to the soldiers that the sarechsme is very, very ill.

After two days have elapsed, he asks the physician, who is feeling his pulse, in a weak voice and with an air of indifference, how matters are progressing at the citadel ; whether the traitor, Taher Pacha, still presumes to besiege the viceroy in his palace, and laments his inability to fly to his master's assistance with his troops. When the physician tells him that the rebels had stormed the citadel, and that Cousrouf had fled, Mohammed shudders and sinks back upon his couch. Truly, he is very ill ! How could this intelligence otherwise have so fearful an effect ?

"Yes, Cousrouf has fled; he hoped for your assistance in vain, and was compelled to yield when it did not come. Yes, sarechsme, he fled secretly through the back gate of the citadel into the desert with his faithful body-guard and his women."

"And Taher Pacha?" asks Mohammed, eagerly.

"Taher Pacha has proclaimed himself *caimacan*. On my way here I met the cadi of the sheiks going to the citadel to present the robe of fur to the caimacan, in token of their recognition."

Loud and derisive laughter resounds from Mohammed Ali's lips.

"Really the sarechsme is very ill, and in a fearful state of excitement! His head may be affected by it. It may become dangerous."

The physician prescribes cooling applications for his head, and goes in person to superintend their preparation.

The door has hardly closed behind the physician, when Mohammed bounds from his bed.

"Now I am no longer ill! The time for action has come!"

He calls one of his Nubian slaves.

"Hasten, my Saneb—hasten to the camp of the Mameluke beys. You will find them near Petresin, on the banks of the Nile. Seek Osman Bey Bardissi, and say to him: 'The time has come; await, beside the great Pyramid at Gheezeh, him with whom you conversed there two weeks since; await him there with all his forces.' Have you understood me? Repeat my words."

The Nubian repeated what he had said, word for word.

"And now hasten away, time is precious, and my message is important."

Hardly had the Nubian departed, when messengers came to summon Mohammed to the citadel, to Taher Pacha, the new caimacan. With a profound bow, Mohammed replies that he will immediately do himself the honor of waiting on the caimacan.

He calls his servants to his assistance, and puts on his gala uniform, mounts his splendidly-caparisoned steed, and, followed by a small body-guard of eight men, gallops through the streets to the citadel.

Taher Pacha, reclining on Cousrouf's cushions and smoking his chibouque, receives Mohammed with lively manifestations of delight.

"See what a man can make of himself, Mohammed? Here I lie, smoking Cousrouf's chibouque on Cousrouf's cushions!"

"I congratulate you on your magnificence, and hope you may long repose there."

"It is to be hoped that I shall," replied Taher Pacha. "Fortune smiles on the daring. Had you been bold enough, you might now be in my place, Mohammed Ali; but you probably shrank from incurring the risk. I acted boldly, you perceive, and mine is now the viceroy's crown. Why did you not grasp it? you needed but to stretch forth your hand."

"And you did grasp it. Allah was gracious to you. I dared not; it seemed too far from me. And then, I admit, my head is too small for so heavy an ornament!"

"I feel strong enough to bear this burden," said Taher, laughing, "and now that I have it, I shall also know how to secure myself in its possession. All Cairo already recognizes me in my new dignity, and your recognition is now alone wanting, Mohammed Ali."

"I bow in all humility before the caimacan, and shall also recognize him as viceroy as soon as an answer is received from Stamboul."

Taher smiled graciously. "And now receive my first instructions, sarechsme. Send messengers to the Mameluke beys, I desire to make peace with them; I wish them to be my friends. We have had bloodshed enough. United with the Mamelukes, we shall be able to defy our Turkish enemies."

"I am of the same opinion," replied Mohammed, bowing profoundly.

"Then carry out my instructions at once."

"Your command shall be obeyed without delay," replied Mohammed, as he turned and left the apartment.

"He does not know what he is doing. It would have been dangerous for me to send a messenger to the Mamelukes. Now, in his assumed authority, he empowers me to do what

I have long since done in my own interests. O Taher Pacha, you think yourself entitled to the throne because you have scaled the walls of the citadel; you are, however, grievously mistaken."

After three days the messenger reached the bardissi's camp, and delivered Mohammed's message.

Osman Bardissi shouted with delight. "The sarechsme keeps his word, and is about to unite with us. Come, ye Mamelukes, let us march to Gheezeh to meet our ally."

On the third day of their march the Mamelukes reach their destination, and encamp on the banks of the Nile, near Gheezeh.

Early on the following morning an officer in a glittering uniform rides into the Mameluke camp, accompanied by a small body-guard. Bardissi recognizes the officer and joyously greets him, and Sheik Arnhyn, who rides at his side.

"There comes the brave sarechsme, Mohammed Ali; he keeps his word, and comes to unite his forces with ours."

"A hearty welcome, Mohammed Ali; a hearty welcome from me, and from all of us!"

"A warm greeting to you, Bardissi!" cried Mohammed, extending his hand.

There they stood, hand-in-hand, gazing at each other thoughtfully and earnestly. The others had respectfully withdrawn.

"We are both thinking of the past, Osman Bey," said Mohammed, with a soft smile. "You see I have not forgotten the name you impressed on my memory at Cavalla."

"Nor have I forgotten your name, Mohammed Ali," replied Bardissi. "The boys who defied each other at Cavalla have become men, and friends, too, have they not, Mohammed?"

"Yes, friends, too, I hope, Bardissi; and I press your hand in token of my friendship."

"And I yours. I am your friend, and welcome you heartily to our camp. But where are your forces? We have assembled here to meet them; are they not coming?"

"They will soon come," replied Mohammed; "my army awaits my orders. I have hastened here in the mean while to tell you that I am your faithful friend and ally. Great events have taken place in Cairo, and others are now impending. Wait a short time, and I shall probably be able to bring you the troops of the new caimacan, Taher Pacha, as well as my own. The caimacan wishes your friendship and alliance, and sends me as his messenger. But, as I have already said, I advise you to wait. The caimacan's rule is an overbearing one, and strange events are about to take place in Cairo. I do not wish to take part in them, and have therefore come here with a small escort. My soldiers are encamped near Cairo, and await my orders to march here. I came alone to prove that I trust you, and, with your permission, will remain here with you a few days."

"That was nobly thought and nobly done, Mohammed; you honor us more by coming alone than if you had come with all your forces," cried Bardissi, as he embraced Mohammed.

"Now you are mine, Mohammed, and I love you with all my heart. United with you, my hero, we can defy all the Turks that may be sent over from Stamboul."

Mohammed was right; strange events soon occurred in the palace of the caimacan at Cairo. The revolt which he had helped to excite had not yet subsided. He had turned the wild herd loose, but was now unable to manage it. The soldiers demanded their pay of the caimacan as savagely as they had demanded it of Cousrouf.

But where was the necessary money to be obtained? Money was the pretext on which he began the revolt, and now he finds himself enthroned in the palace as caimacan with empty coffers, Cousrouf having taken with him whatever treasure he possessed. He had invoked curses upon himself by endeavoring to procure money by force and extortion. What had become of the promises solemnly made to the people by the caimacan on the first day of his rule?—

"Peace and quiet shall prevail in the land, and happiness be the portion of the much-tormented inhabitants of Cairo."

Instead of peace, he has brought upon them new discord and revolt; instead of happiness, new misery.

In order to appease the wrath of his soldiers, he caused a number of the leading citizens to be arrested, and, upon their refusal to pay the money demanded of them, several of them were stretched on the rack, and others beheaded.

Finally, nothing remained to the new caimacan but to do as Cousrouf had done, and meet the demands of his soldiers with the statement that he had no money, and could not pay them.

The savage cry of the soldiery for pay was renewed in front of the citadel day after day with increased fierceness, and at last the two bim bashis, Moussa and Ismail Aga, were sent up to the citadel to the caimacan to make a final appeal for pay on the part of the soldiers.

He received them with a proud, gloomy look, asked why they came, and how these rebellious soldiers dare approach him in such a manner. They bowed their heads, and, as they approached the caimacan, entreated him in humble tones to satisfy the just demands of the soldiers. They conjured him to do so for the sake of peace, and for his own sake. The soldiers were in a highly excited state, and disposed to adopt extreme measures.

"To adopt extreme measures!" cried Taher. "How dare you address such words to me?"

"We have been sent to you by the troops, highness, and must act according to our instructions. Once more, we implore you to pay the soldiers!"

"And once more I repeat to you that I neither can nor will pay them!" cried Taher, furiously. "If the traitors dare to threaten me, I will lay their heads at their feet!"

"Then we had best begin with you!" cried the bim bashis, rushing upon him, and running him through with their ataghans. They then severed the head from the body, opened a window, and hurled it down to the soldiers, who received it with shouts of delight, and then rushed into the palace.

The caimacan's faithful Armenians threw themselves in their way, and a murderous conflict arose on the stairway, and in all the halls and apartments of the palace. The conflict extended to all the streets of the city, and the work of slaughter was carried on all over Cairo.

Taher Pacha is dead, murdered! The magnificence of the new caimacan is at an end after a rule of scarcely twenty days. The intelligence reaches Gheezeh, where the Mamelukes are encamped, and where the sarechsme Mohammed Ali is sojourning. He smiles as he hears it.

"I told you to wait. But now I say, let us hasten to Cairo! Let messengers be sent to my troops, instructing them to march out to meet us, and the Armenians will, I think, also join us. The time has come. Let us hasten to Cairo, ye Mameluke beys!"

The camp resounds with shouts of delight, and the Mameluke beys mount their steeds, and place themselves at the head of their followers to begin the march.

Mohammed Ali also mounts his horse, but, before he turns, glances around, and sees the Bedouin sheik Arnhyn, who is about to mount his dromedary, and calls him to his side.

"Well, Arnhyn, your dromedary is here, but I miss your daughter in the palanquin!"

"She is at home in the tent awaiting my return, sarechsme!"

"In her father's tent, still?" said Mohammed, smiling. "She has not yet followed to his tent him who has kissed her, and made her his wife?"

"No, sarechsme, she is still in her father's tent, and there, she says, she will remain. Many fine young men have wooed her, for she has been made rich by the spoils her father gathered on the plain of Damanhour. Yes, Arnhyn will give his daughter a rich dowry, and there are wooers enough. But Butheita is a strange child! When a handsome suitor comes, and I beg her to follow him to his tent, she shakes her head, rejects his gifts, and laughs at his sweet words. 'You are ugly!' says she, laughing. 'I will love only the handsomest of men, and him only will I follow to his tent.' That is what Butheita says, sarechsme!"

"And that is what she should say," replied Mohammed, smiling. "Bear a greeting to Butheita from me, when you return home, sheik, and tell her she is right in waiting until he comes whom she will gladly follow to his tent, and who may kiss her. Tell her to wait patiently, for Allah will surely send her the man she can love. Greet Butheita for me."

He mounts his horse, and gallops off to where the Mameluke beys are awaiting him in order to begin their march to Cairo.

The Mameluke beys and Mohammed Ali enter Cairo in triumph. Taher Pacha's Armenians have joined him, and, together with his Albanians, they form a magnificent corps. The delighted people of Cairo cry out to Mohammed: "Oh, give us peace, brave sarechsme! Let the day of peace at last dawn over unhappy Cairo!"

Mohammed had conferred with the leaders of the Armenians, and, with their consent, the citadel was tendered the Mameluke beys as a residence. They joyfully accepted it, and proudly took up their abode in the fortress.

Mohammed Ali, however, returned to his own house, and when he had reached the retirement of his apartment, and no one could see, he raised his arm threateningly in the direction of the citadel.

"You are in my residence, ye Mamelukes," muttered he. "You are now the masters of Cairo, but I swear that I will drive you out of my palace, as I drove out the viceroy, Cousrouf Pacha. I am awaiting my time. It has not yet come, but I now know that it will come!"

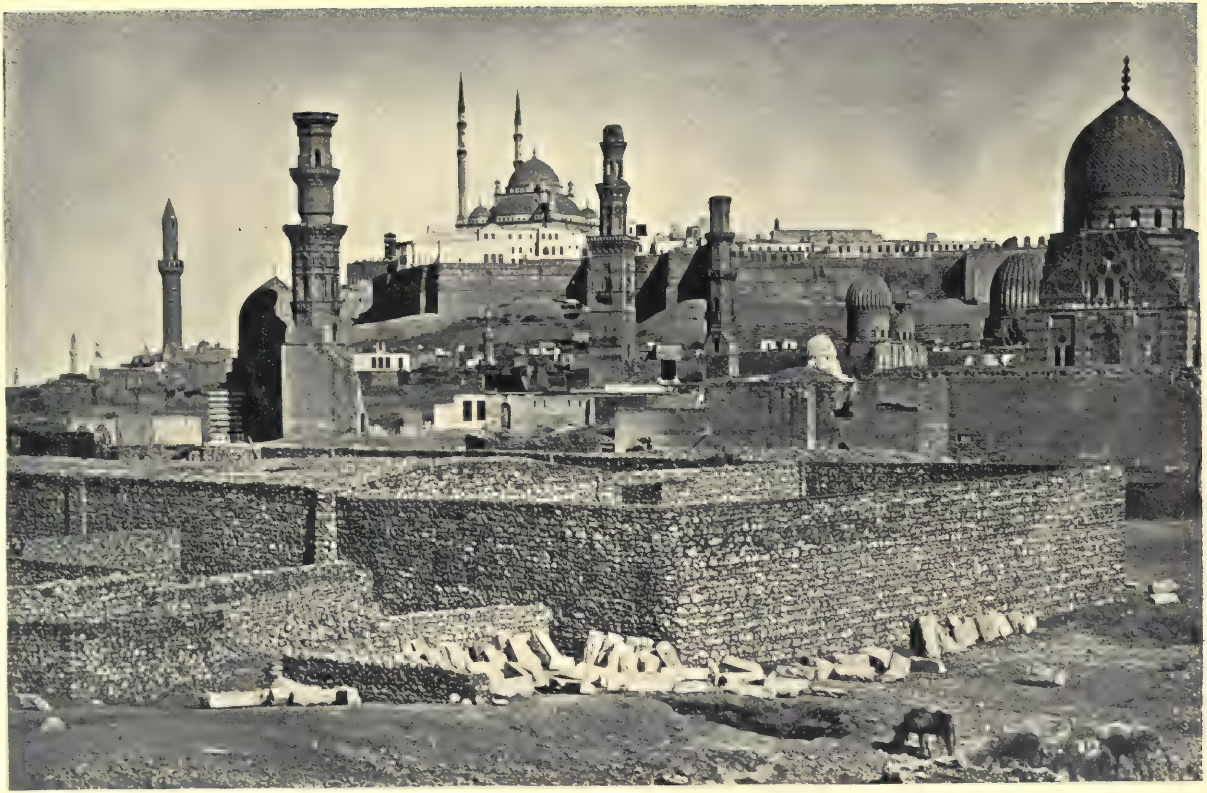
CHAPTER IX.

VENGEANCE AT LAST.

THE Mamelukes, so often driven from Cairo, are once more enthroned in the citadel. Cairo reposes, and hopes for a long period of peace.

And it really seemed that peace had entered the city with the Mamelukes and Osman Bey. The citizens could once more pursue their daily avocations in tranquillity, and bands of disorderly soldiers no longer roamed about in the neighborhood, destroying and plundering.

Perhaps the wounds inflicted on the people by so many cruel wars would have time to heal. But no, their hopes are



THE CITADEL OF CAIRO.

vain. In Cairo there is peace, for Ismaïl Bey, the oldest and wisest of the Mamelukes, sits enthroned in the citadel, and with him Bardissi, whom Mohammed Ali calls his friend.

In Cairo there is peace, for the Albanians and Armenians are under subjection to their sarechsme, Mohammed Ali. But, without, war raises its bloody head, and threatens Egypt with new misery.

Is not Cousrouf Pacha, the former viceroy, still in the country? Has he not fled to Upper Egypt? Have not his troops followed him there, and has not his reputation drawn many to his standard? And are there not many who refuse to submit to the Mameluke rule, and remain faithful to the flag of their master, Cousrouf Pacha, the Viceroy of Egypt?

No sooner had Cousrouf heard of the death of Taher Pacha than he started from Damietta, where he had lain encamped with his army, to return to Cairo and resume his authority.

Mohammed, informed of this advance, consulted Bardissi, and it was agreed that their united forces should march out to meet the enemy, Hassan Bey being first sent out with a body of Arabian cavalry to feel the enemy's lines.

With united forces they now marched out, Mohammed Ali and the beys, his former enemies, side by side; the Albanians, Ottomans, and Armenians, were in front; behind them came the Mamelukes and Bedouins.

In the mean while, Cousrouf had advanced victoriously. He had driven Hassan Bey before him, and had stormed the village of Fareskour, in which the bey had fortified himself. The inhabitants were slain, and the houses sacked and destroyed by Cousrouf's soldiers.

After this victory, the advance on Cairo seemed easier. Cousrouf, however, preferred to retreat to Damietta, having learned that a larger force was advancing to meet him. Hassan Bey had returned by hurried marches to Cairo, and demanded re-enforcements, which were given him. With these, he again advanced toward Damietta, followed by Mohammed and Bardissi with their powerful columns. With great haste, Cousrouf set about making Damietta strong enough to defy the enemy. The walls were crowned with cannon, and two guns were placed in position on the bridge that spans the Nile canal, at Damietta. A plentiful supply of provisions and munitions of war was also accumulated in the fortress.

"And now let us await the enemy. Allah and the right are with us. The grand-sultan at Stamboul has appointed me viceroy; the rebels have driven me from Cairo, but my just cause will lead me back in triumph!"

In such terms did Cousrouf speak to his soldiers to encourage them to make a gallant defence of the fortress.

But Cousrouf's words excited little enthusiasm among his followers; the scouts sent out returned with the intelligence that the enemy was approaching in immense force.

They were advancing along the Nile, Mohammed with the infantry, Bardissi with the mounted troops. Now they were separated from the enemy by the canal only, but Cousrouf's cannon made impassible the one bridge that united the two shores.

"Yet we must effect our passage to the other side," said Bardissi.

"Yes, but the question is, how are we to do so?" said Mohammed.

All the bim bashis and boulouk bashis, together with the beys and their kachefs, were called together in a council of war. For a long time their deliberations were fruitless. How were they to get over without boats or bridges?

"We must ford it," said Mohammed Ali. "There must be some place where we can venture to cross on foot. There are shallow places in the canal, I have been told; and, if some one could be found willing to incur the danger of making inquiries on the other side, in Damietta, where they are better informed on the subject, we might succeed in finding such a place."

"I will undertake this duty," said the kachef Youssouf, stepping forward. "I will go over to Damietta and obtain the desired information."

"You are a brave man, Kachef Youssouf," said Bardissi, "but consider that you risk your life, and perhaps in vain."

"I shall, however, die in the performance of my duty! I will go over and make the attempt!"

"As you are? And do you not suppose the first sentinel on the walls of Damietta will shoot you down?"

"I shall not go as I am, Osman Bey. They will not be able to recognize in me the kachef of Bardissi and of Sitta Nefysseh."

And he was right. He was not recognized. Disguised as a *fellah*, in the long blouse that hung down to his feet, entirely unarmed, a plain brown cap on his head, and carrying, suspended to a strap over his shoulder, a basket filled with watermelons, Kachef Youssouf entered the fortress of Damietta on the following morning.

He called out his fruit, and people hastened to him to purchase. The kachef chatted gayly with them in the Arabian tongue, and told them of the enemy who was approaching but who could find no passage over the canal; and Youssouf laughed at and derided the enemy.

They quickly observed that he was a faithful servant of the viceroy, and therefore chatted with him unreservedly. Much was told the fellah of the want of the soldiers, and of the longing of the people to see the war terminated.

"If they could only get over," said some of the people, with a sigh. "There are shallow places, here and there, where a passage would be easy."

Youssouf's manner was careless and indifferent, but nothing escaped him. No one read in his countenance the fearful danger to which he was exposed, and he passed the entire day strolling around in Damietta. But, when night came, he hastened to the canal, and tried the places casually mentioned during the day. He finally attempted to cross over at the place spoken of as the most shallow.

And he has succeeded! There he stands on the other bank, dripping with water, his wet blouse clinging to his person. He hastened to the camp to Bardissi, to bring the glad intelligence that there is a place where they can cross on foot to the other shore in spite of the cannon on the bridge, and of the garrison of Damietta.

"Well done, brave kachef!" cried Bardissi. "You have deserved your reward, and you shall have it! I appoint you kachef of my guard, and give you a command of one hundred Mamelukes."

Youssouf's countenance lighted up, and his eyes sparkled with delight. He thought of Sitta Nefysseh, and rejoiced in his successful feat, and in his reward, because she would be pleased.

"O Sitta Nefysseh, when I come into your presence, and kneel down before you, will you receive me graciously, and permit me to remain with you henceforth? O Sitta Nefysseh, if the time were only come when on bended knee I can say to you: 'Your servant has returned, but he is no longer a poor kachef! He has won laurels because you commanded him to seek them! May he now serve you again?' Oh, that I were with you again, Sitta Nefysseh!"

On the following night they were conducted by Youssouf to the place at which he had forded the canal.

The Mameluke beys dismount and step into the water. In advance is Osman Bey, and beside him Mohammed Ali. The passage must be effected noiselessly, so as not to attract the attention of the enemy.

The water rushes past them, almost carrying their feet from under them. It already reaches their shoulders, and they can hardly retain their foothold. Kachef Youssouf must have been deceived. A wave, driven by the night-wind, rolls by and sweeps Mohammed with it.

Osman Bey sees his friend torn from his side, rushes after him, grasps him with his strong arm, and holds him securely.

"I thank you, Osman Bey; you have saved my life."

"And I thank Allah that I was at your side and could save it."

Finally they succeed in getting over, and now they stand on the other shore. Bardissi embraces Mohammed, and congratulates him on their safe passage. He then grasps Youssouf's hand, and thanks him once more.

"Now, good Cousrouf, the days of your rule are numbered."

"Yes," murmured Mohammed to himself, "I, too, rejoice in your coming overthrow. O Allah, give us all victory, and give me vengeance!"

The passage of the troops is effected. The Albanians first rush to the bridge where the cannon are in position, cut down the gunners before they can give an alarm, and with the captured guns fire their first shots into Damietta.

The thunder of these shots arouses the enemy, who lie encamped in front of the fortress, and a bloody, fiercely-contested battle begins. But at its conclusion the allies, Bardissi and Mohammed Ali, enter Damietta in triumph. No quarter is given. They massacre all who fall into their hands ; every house is sacked and then burned. On the square in front of Fort Lesbe, a column of soldiers, Cousrouf Pacha at its head, sitting proudly erect on his steed, still opposes them. He has been bravely fighting all along, fighting for life, for victory, for glory, but he has fought in vain; he prefers, however, to die at the head of his followers, than to flee, or fall into the hands of Mohammed Ali.

The enemy approaches. A ball strikes Cousrouf's horse, and it sinks to the ground. With difficulty he succeeds in extricating himself from his fallen steed.

"Upon them, my brave soldiers!" he cries, drawing his ataghan. "Let us fight our way through to the fort. There we shall be secure."

"You shall never reach it!" exclaims Bardissi, his uplifted sword descending upon Cousrouf's head.

Suddenly his arm is grasped, and held as in a vise.

"Give him to me, Bardissi!" cries Mohammed.

"And you wish to save Cousrouf's life, Mohammed?"

"Only give him to me, Bardissi, I pray you!"

Bardissi recognized in the tone in which these few words were uttered, that Mohammed's motive in making his request was not love for Cousrouf.

"You are my prisoner," cried Mohammed, tearing the sword from Cousrouf's hand, and hurling it far from him. He then grasped him by the shoulders and looked him firmly in the eye. "Cousrouf Pacha, I, Mohammed Ali, make you my prisoner."

Cousrouf makes no reply, but only gazes defiantly upon his enemy; gradually his head sinks down upon his breast. Yes, he is vanquished and a prisoner, a prisoner of his worst enemy. He could be in no worse hands than in those that now hold him. To become Mohammed Ali's prisoner was the worst that could befall him.

And vanquished and captured he is, by this his most relentless enemy! With him are vanquished all his followers, and nothing is left of the fortress of Damietta but ashes and ruins.

The victors have decided to send Cousrouf a prisoner to Cairo, to the citadel where he once sat enthroned.

Mohammed entered the apartment in a half-burned house of Damietta in which Cousrouf was confined. None else is in the room. Without, the sentinel is pacing to and fro, and in an adjoining room lie two Nubian slaves who have remained faithful to their master, wounded and exhausted by loss of blood.

Cousrouf sees Mohammed enter, and a groan escapes his breast; involuntarily he carries his hand to his belt. He is unarmed! He cannot hurl himself upon him, and in his downfall destroy him also.

Mohammed stands before him, armed, his eyes fixed on him in a hard, cruel gaze. Cousrouf feels this glance, and knows that his enemy rejoices in his humiliation. For a long time no word is spoken. At last Cousrouf raises his eyes and endeavors to look his enemy in the face; but he cannot. So terrible, so threatening is his expression, that Cousrouf shudders. It seems to him at this moment that an avenging angel stands before him; and the viceroy, usually so haughty and overbearing, feels humiliated and helpless.

"Cousrouf Pacha," said Mohammed, after a long pause, "look at me! I have long worn a mask; you placed it on my countenance, and I allowed you to do so, and awaited my time. Cousrouf Pacha, raise your eyes and look at me! I no longer wear a mask!"

Cousrouf looked up at him, and now his glance was firm, and his countenance composed.

"I see, Mohammed Ali, sarechsme by my grace, I see that you now wear a mask. He who now stands before me is hardly a human being, but the mere embodiment of hatred—envy and hatred personified."

"You mistake, Cousrouf," replied Mohammed in haughty tones. "Not envy and hatred, but vengeance personified. Cousrouf, I have awaited this hour for thirteen years. Am I not to enjoy it now? Do you think I would relinquish it for all the wealth and power of the world?"

"I know you would not," replied Cousrouf, quietly. "Yet you would give all these thirteen years of falsehood and trickery, of cunning flattery; yes, you would give the miserable triumph of this hour for a single smile of the slave to whom I awarded merited punishment. Ah, Mohammed Ali, you fancied yourself the victor. I am he! This your thirst for vengeance proclaims. It tells me that the wound in your heart still burns. And who gave you this wound? I, Cousrouf Pacha, and therefore do you seek vengeance on me. The wound still bleeds, and I am triumphant! Yes, I am the victor. You should see your own countenance at this moment; now, you are not vengeance and hatred, but misery, personified. Let me in conclusion proclaim this: Masa is dead, and I slew Masa. Slay me, her murderer. But dying, I shall cry exultingly: 'Your wound still bleeds, and I am victor! Masa is dead, here stands her slayer, slay him!'"

For a moment Mohammed was silent; a deathly pallor had overspread his countenance, and his eyes gleamed fiercely. He grasped the dagger in his girdle, drew it from its sheath, and raised it high in his right hand.

Cousrouf gazed at him with a triumphant expression.

He wished for death, he longed for it after his fearful overthrow.

Perhaps Mohammed read this in his glance. His arm sank slowly to his side, and he replaced the dagger in its sheath.

"Cousrouf Pacha, you desire death, but you shall not die. You shall live to learn that the wound in my heart no longer bleeds; that it is healed. If it were not so, by Allah, you, the murderer of Masa, were already dead! Do you hear me? I pronounce the name I have not spoken for many years, the name Masa! You were her murderer, not her judge! You were not her master, she was not your slave. Her death was not lawful; you could not condemn her, and therefore do I call you a common murderer. I know that murderers are slain, that blood is atoned for by blood. This punishment the heart dictates, and this punishment the law of the land prescribes. But this punishment were too mild for you, Cousrouf Pacha. I will not slay you ; you shall suffer shame and humiliation ; you shall drink the cup of bitterness and disgrace to the very dregs. I will take you to Cairo, and there in the citadel you shall await my last act of revenge."

"You threaten me," said Cousrouf, quietly. "What evil can you add to that already inflicted ? I do not fear your threat, and I shall not feel humiliated at being led a prisoner into the citadel, where I once ruled your master, and where Mohammed Ali, the sarechsme by my grace, so often knelt in the dust before me. I have been vanquished in honorable warfare, and in a just cause ; and though you, the victor, triumph over, I shall still remain, your lawful master !"

"Prove this to the people of Cairo ; see whether you will be recognized as master there ; whether those who formerly flattered you will now raise a finger to liberate you, or restore you to the throne. And when you find that they will not, then remember, Cousrouf Pacha—that, too, is a part of Mohammed Ali's revenge—had I slain you, all your sufferings would have been at an end ! But you shall live and suffer for many a long year to come ! For Cousrouf Pacha caused Mohammed Ali to suffer for long years. Then suffer, Cousrouf ; and, let me tell you, from this hour I shall suffer no longer—from this hour my wounds are healed, for your wounds bleed. And now go to Cairo humiliated, covered with disgrace, the prisoner of Mohammed Ali !"

CHAPTER X.

THE RETURN TO CAIRO.

JOY and exultation reign in Cairo. The united forces of the Mamelukes, Albanians, and Armenians, have returned home crowned with victory. Damietta and Rosetta have fallen, and the Turks have everywhere retreated ; a miserable remnant only have found safety in Alexandria, where Courschid Pacha rules.

The people throng the streets to witness the grand entrance of the victorious troops.

There, at the head of four thousand Mamelukes, surrounded by a body of beys and kachefs, comes Osman Bey Bardissi, the hero of so many battles. How sparkling his eyes, how radiant the smile with which he greets the populace that hails him with shouts of enthusiasm!

He passes by, and now come the Albanians and Armenians. At their head rides the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali; around him his bim bashis, in their glittering uniforms. But who is it that rides beside him on the splendidly-caparisoned ass—who is the man in the long green caftan, trimmed with fur, the green turban on his head adorned with its glittering crescent? He is unarmed, and yet he rides beside the sarechsme. His countenance is pale, and his lips are firmly compressed, as if to keep back a cry of rage that struggles for utterance. Who is this man? Can it be Cousrouf Pacha? Yes, it is he, the viceroy, the prisoner given to Mohammed Ali by Bardissi. In his magnanimity Mohammed had grasped Bardissi's arm, uplifted for the deadly stroke, and had thus saved his enemy's life. And now he generously allows the man whose life he has saved to ride into Cairo at his side. The people relate this to each other, and are loud in their praises of the sarechsme's magnanimity.

Was it magnanimity? Ask Cousrouf, who feels that the favor shown him by his enemy is worse than death, who feels with anguish that he is merely an object of contempt, while the air resounds with the people's enthusiastic greeting to the accursed Mohammed Ali. Him the people had never saluted thus; upon his head the sheiks and cadis had never invoked Allah's blessing.

Now the citadel looms up before them; the sarechsme's countenance is radiant; smilingly he turns to Cousrouf.

"I take pleasure, highness, in conducting you to the citadel. You fled in the darkness of night; I conduct you back in the broad light of day, and wish you a pleasant sojourn in your palace. I regret, however, that you are not to reside there entirely alone. The great Mameluke Bey, Ismaïl, now resides there, and but few apartments remain unoccupied. With these few you will therefore have to content yourself."

"I should be contented with the smallest room, though it lay beneath the earth, could I be spared your presence, traitor!" mutters Cousrouf.

"Spared my presence!" cries Mohammed Ali. "Consider, highness, that I alone am to amuse and entertain you. With me alone can you converse, and recall fond recollections of the past, and I shall therefore not fail to wait on your highness right often. And now, highness, ride in advance and enter the palace first, as the master should."

He draws rein as they reach the gateway, and gives the ass on which Cousrouf is mounted a blow with the flat of his sword, that causes it to rush into the court-yard with a succession of quick bounds. The soldiers standing around laugh loudly. And this laughter makes Cousrouf's cheeks red with shame, and sends tears to his eyes, tears of rage.

Several of Ismaïl Bey's Mamelukes now approach, and lift Cousrouf from the saddle and lead him into the house. Mohammed seems to have forgotten him; let Ismaïl Bey take care of him. To him Mohammed intrusts the keeping of his prisoner.

"He belongs to me, Ismaïl, to me alone; I only intrust my prisoner to you for safe keeping."

He is conducted to the upper chambers of the citadel; there let his thoughts prey on the memory of her he murdered, and of him who avenges her!

The houses of Cairo are adorned with carpets and flowers, and laughter and merry-making are the order of the day.

The house of Mourad's widow also shows signs of life within, to-day. Sitta Nefysseh has returned to her home after a long sojourn in the house of Sheik Sadat. The doors of her house and the park-gate are again thrown open. Sitta Nefysseh is at home; she sits behind the golden lattice-work of her window and gazes out into the street. Why does her heart throb so wildly? Is Sitta Nefysseh awaiting any one?

A long array of richly-attired officers passes by. Sitta Nefysseh gazes at them intently, her heart still throbbing wildly. Suddenly she utters a low cry, and with closed eyes reels back from the window. It is he—yes, she has seen him, the young Mameluke bey, galloping toward her house on his proud steed, followed by a body of Mamelukes. She hears him stop before the door, and she knows that he is coming.

Her countenance radiant with delight, she stands with outstretched arms, as she had stood when she last saw him, and, as then, she whispers: "I love him! oh, I love him! My soul yearns for him! I would clasp him in my arms, and yet—no, it may not be!" murmurs she, interrupting herself and letting her arms sink down to her side. "No, it may not, cannot be! They would kill him! If Bardissi did not, L'Elfi would! And then my oath! O Mourad, be with me in this hour, that I may remain firm! Be strong, my heart! It may not be!"

The door opened, and a slave entered to announce that the Mameluke bey, Youssouf, was waiting at the door with his suite, and humbly begged that he might be permitted to see Sitta Nefysseh.

"Let him enter," said she, making an effort to compose herself. "Tell my women to go into the adjoining room, and to open the door."

Poor woman's heart! So strong in love, and yet so weak! These women and the open door were to stand guard over her heart, and keep her from forgetting all else in his presence.

Now the door opens and Youssouf enters. It seems to her that he has grown taller. His deeds have elevated him, and his countenance is radiant with energy and courage. Yet he kneels down before her, and kisses the hem of her robe.

"Sitta Nefysseh, you bade me go, and I went. Upon my return, my first thoughts were of you. I wished to hear from your sweet lips the word welcome! Do you speak it, Sitta Nefysseh?"

"Welcome, Youssouf Bey! How beautiful that sounds—Youssouf Bey! But rise, it does not become the hero to bend the knee before a woman, before Nefysseh."

"I was your slave when I went, now that I have returned I am your slave still. And thus should he salute his mistress."

He bends down lower and kisses the gold-embroidered slipper that clasps her little foot.

"Youssouf!" she cried, in severe tones, "I command you to rise from your knees!"

"You see, I obey you, as it beseems your slave to do," said he, springing to his feet; "and he now begs to be permitted to enter your service again."

"My service?" said she, with an air of astonishment. "Mourad's widow is not so proud and not of such high rank as to desire to have a troop of Mamelukes in her service. You know I liberated all my Mamelukes at my husband's death; and how could I, who have so few servants about me, dare to take a Mameluke bey into my service? No, such honor were too great for me. You, Youssouf Bey, must go out into the world again. You will still accomplish many great deeds, and do me honor. For, when your deeds are spoken of, people will say: 'He was once a Mameluke with Mourad Bey, and afterward the kachef of Sitta Nefysseh. It was in Mourad's house that he grew up and became a hero.' That suffices for me, and Sitta Nefysseh will rejoice in your renown."

"Sitta Nefysseh!" cried he, in tones of anguish, "you drive me from you! I have done as you commanded. I went out to battle and did not seek death, because you had forbidden me to do so, but fought like a lion, and earned a name. Now that I have returned, you refuse to give me the one reward I desire. While the bullets whistled about me, amid the din of battle, I thought only of Sitta Nefysseh, who would bid me welcome when I returned home, and restore to me my place in her house. This was the only reward I sought. And now you drive me from you!"

She had listened to him in breathless suspense. It was bliss to hear his words, yet her countenance must not betray her. She slowly raised her eyes, and then gazed at him, long and fixedly.

"Youssouf Bey," said she, "you cannot remain with me, and though it may seem hard to you to-day, to-morrow you will confess that it is impossible. Youssouf Bey was not created for such purposes. He is a hero! Without, your men await you. Return to them. Those who imagine that peace has entered the city with you are in error. There are still many laurels to be earned by Youssouf Bey on the battlefield. Go and gather them!"

"They have no charms for me; I desire only to look on you, to love you, Sitta Nefysseh! To remain with you and dream of bliss, and perhaps—"

"Be still!" cried she, interrupting him. "Do you wish my women to hear what your folly dictates? Mourad's widow commands you to be silent. Now you have terminated our interview. Go, join your men!"

"Forgive me, Sitta, forgive me! By Allah, I entreat you, do not deal so severely with your poor Youssouf! You are lustrous, yet also cold like the diamond! You know no mercy; for, alas, you know not love! Yet, I conjure you, be merciful; do not drive me from you; and I swear that I will speak no more of love, but only serve you as your faithful slave!"

"Let us terminate this interview," said she, in a low voice. "I shall remain convinced that you should not stay in my house, and you will therefore go."

"I must go!" cried he, in despairing tones, "yet others may approach you! The great Bardissi will be welcome, and L'Elfi may also come. They may speak to you of their love and adoration, but me you command to depart!"

"No, Youssouf," cried she, "to them I shall say, depart also! I swear by Allah and by my—"

She stopped, she had almost pronounced the word that trembled on her lips. "By my love," she had almost said, yet, with quick command of herself, she added:

"By my honor, Bardissi and L'Elfi shall visit me no more! From this day the doors of my house are closed against all men; this I swear to you, Youssouf!"

"I cannot thank you for doing so," said Youssouf, sadly. "If no man is to cross your threshold, I also am banished from your presence, and I therefore rather entreat you to let others visit you, in order that I too may come to you sometimes."

There was something so humble, so imploring in his voice and look, that Sitta Nefysseh's heart was touched against her will. She could not do otherwise, she held out her hand and gave him a kindly look.

"I have sworn that no other man should cross my threshold ; but you, Youssouf, you may come sometimes."

He starts, and gazes at her intently. Her voice sounds so sweet, so changed, and his eyes sparkle with delight.

She quickly withdraws her hand and looks down. She feels that she has betrayed herself for a moment, she feels the ardent gaze that is fastened on her, and dares not look up, for fear that he may read the love that is reflected in her eyes.

"Farewell, Youssouf Bey ! I tell you, you may sometimes come, but farewell for the present."

She turns, and, without looking at him again, goes into the other room, where her women are awaiting her. With a quick movement she draws the curtain over the door ; she knows that no one must see him at this moment ; she knows he will fall on his knees and kiss the place where she stood. Yes, she knows this, for she loves him, and understands his heart.

And she is right ! He has fallen on his knees, and, again and again, kisses the spot where she stood. Then he stretches out his arms and opens his lips to utter a sweet word. Yet, he does not pronounce it, for, if what he thinks be true, the air itself may not hear it ! No, his lips utter no word ! He only kisses the air she has breathed. And now can he go, for she has said that he may return !

He turns and leaves the house ; his soldiers have never seen their kachef's countenance so radiant as now. He mounts his horse, and gallops off through the streets, followed by his Mamelukes.

Sitta Nefysseh hears his horse's hoofs ring out against the pavement, and, like him, she sinks down upon her knees, and stretches out her arms. "Youssouf, I love you ! Allah be praised, I have seen you again !"

CHAPTER XI.

MOHAMMED ALI AND BARDISSI.

SITTA NEFYSSEH was right: peace had not entered Cairo with the victorious troops. War and turmoil prevailed everywhere, and the confusion became worse each day.

The Mamelukes now ruled once more in Cairo, and, with them, Mohammed Ali, Bardissi's beloved friend.

Ismaïl Bey sat enthroned in the citadel, and was the outward representative of the magnificence and grandeur of the Mamelukes, but the real rulers were Bardissi and Mohammed Ali. And these two found no pleasure in lying on soft cushions, and speaking of the deeds of the past. They longed for renewed activity, for new glory! And, even if this had not been the case, they would, nevertheless, have been compelled to draw the sword again. For the Turks were marching out from Alexandria, and many places in the south were still in their hands.

Mohammed and Bardissi's united forces march out to a succession of conflicts, ever returning to Cairo crowned with victory.

Bardissi and Mohammed are united in love and friendship, and, though the former seems to be the ruler, the latter reigns in reality. The whole city is aware of this, and those who have complaints to make, and seek redress, come not to Bardissi, but to Mohammed Ali. To him, also, come the consuls of other countries, of England and France, and have long and protracted interviews with him.

The object of their meetings is known to no one. Their conferences are always private, and Bardissi learns of them only what Mohammed chooses to tell him. "Does he tell him the truth?"

Bardissi is convinced that he does, and also convinced that he and Mohammed are in perfect accord with each other.

Ismaïl, the Mameluke chief, is of a different opinion, and often warns the magnanimous Osman Bey Bardissi.

"Be on your guard against Mohammed Ali; he has evil designs. Be on your guard!"

Bardissi shakes his head. "Do not attempt to rob me of my friend, my second self. I love him, and I know that he loves me!"

"He will lead us all to destruction, if he can!" said Ismaïl, solemnly. "Mohammed Ali is not the faithful friend you suppose him to be! Unfortunately, the future will prove to you that my warning was well founded."

Bardissi disregards the warning, and angrily affirms Mohammed's fidelity. He can confide in his friend, and in the wisdom of his counsel. And, as before, Bardissi continues to follow Mohammed's advice in all things.

CHAPTER XII.

AGAINST THE MAMELUKES.

WHILE the Mameluke beys, Ismaïl and Bardissi, were victorious at Cairo, L'Elfi Bey still lay with his followers at Nisibis. There he ruled, and there his Mamelukes robbed, plundered, and tyrannized over the inhabitants.

The governor, Courschid Pacha, was again firmly established in Alexandria, where he was assembling new forces, and preparing to march against Cairo and the Mamelukes, and also against Mohammed Ali and his Albanians and Armenians; he only awaited the sultan's decision. He had sent to Stamboul intelligence of all that had occurred—of Cousrouf's flight, and of his defeat and capture at Damietta.

"Who is now to be appointed viceroy?" This was the question to be decided at Stamboul.

"Do you command, O master, that our troops march against Cairo to drive out the Mamelukes, and reinstate Cousrouf as viceroy! Command, O master, and your servants will obey!"

While the Turks were awaiting an answer from Stamboul, affairs in Cairo were becoming more and more complicated, and law and order no longer reigned there. The Mamelukes were daily becoming more violent and overbearing. They roamed through the city in bands, plundering and burning, and the beys could no longer control them. Daily the sufferings of the people became greater, and their hatred of the lawless Mamelukes more intense.

Robbed and outraged as they were, they were, in addition, continually being called on to pay new taxes to their detested rulers.

The Mameluke beys, Bardissi and Ismaïl, need money, need it more than ever. But where are they to get it? The question is a perplexing, a tormenting one, and with dismay Bardissi submits it to his faithful friend and untiring adviser, the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali.

And it was Mohammed who continually advised the imposition of new taxes, and who was constantly engaged with Bardissi in devising new means of raising money; and the imposition of each new burden was the signal for a new cry of rage from the oppressed people. The soldiers, too, began to murmur again, and to loudly demand their long-withheld pay.

The Albanians and Armenians, subject to Mohammed Ali, were held by him in severe discipline. He did not allow his soldiers to make thieves and robbers of themselves. He threatened with instant death all who should be caught in the act. They, however, clamored all the more loudly for pay.

Mohammed listened to them quietly, and seemed to be touched by their complaints. "But," said he, sadly, "it does not rest with me to pay you, neither can I do so. I am poor myself; I have nothing to live on but my pay, and that is withheld from me also. I therefore have, unfortunately, nothing to give my soldiers. Only the chiefs, Ismaïl or Bardissi, can give you your pay."

His soldiers have understood him. They salute their sarechsme, go away, and say nothing.

Mohammed well knows where the swarm of soldiers that had stood before his house have now gone, led by their bim bashis.

They rush, their numbers increasing on the way, to the house where Bardissi resides. With loud cries they demand to speak with Bardissi himself.

He appears, and asks why they have come. The vestibule of the palace is already crowded with soldiers, and new masses are continually pouring into the court-yard. In reply to Bardissi's question, they all cry loudly : "We have come for our pay ! We want money ! We are hungry ! We want our pay, our money ! "

"Go back to your quarters, and remain there, quietly !" cries Bardissi. "In two days you shall have your pay. Go !"

"We will wait no longer !" cries a bim bashi, and they all cry after him : "We want our money ! We will not leave here until we are paid !"

They press farther and farther into the house, more and more fiercely demanding their pay. Suddenly, a loud, firm voice resounds from the court-yard :

"What does this mean, soldiers ? What are you doing here ? How dare you force your way into the palace of the chief ?"

A smile lights up Bardissi's countenance. This is his friend Mohammed Ali. He will extricate him from his embarrassing position.

Yes, it is he, the sarechsme, at whose approach the men respectfully fall back and make room. He enters the palace and hastens to Bardissi.

"Oh, forgive me ! I knew not that my soldiers had dared to come here. They also came to me and demanded their pay ; I had none to give them, yet I had no idea they would go so far as to annoy you personally."

Bardissi makes no reply. He only looks at his friend, and grasps his hand warmly.

"I thank you, Mohammed, for having come."

"It is my duty, Bardissi," replies he, loud enough to be understood by all his soldiers. "Yes, it is the duty of the sarechsme to be identified with his soldiers ; and if, impelled by their want, they went too far, I beg for their forgiveness ; but I also beg that justice be done them ; and their demands are just. They are in great want, for I have forbidden them to rob and plunder. They have long waited patiently for their pay. But I beg you to give it them now, Bardissi."

The soldiers who had heard all, cried loudly: "Long live our sarechsme! Long live Bardissi, our chief!"

"Believe me, soldiers, he will give you your pay!—Will you not, Bardissi?"

"Yes, sarechsme, your soldiers shall receive their pay. I give you my word, they shall be paid to-morrow. Come to the citadel, to my defterdar to-morrow morning, and he will pay you."

"You have heard it, soldiers: you are to be paid to-morrow. And now go!"

But no one moved; they stood still, grumbling in low tones.

"What," cried the sarechsme, with sparkling eyes, "you dare to remain when I have told you to go! Do you distrust the promise of Osman Bey Bardissi, and of your general? Go, I tell you! You are to be paid to-morrow. Therefore, go and wait!"

They no longer dare to defy, and quietly withdraw.

Bardissi grasps his friend's hand again. "I thank you. You have freed me from much embarrassment; you have done me a great service. But I beg you to lend me your kindly assistance still further. Tell me where am I to get the money with which to pay the soldiers to-morrow?"

"To-morrow? Why trouble yourself about to-morrow? I will endeavor to keep the soldiers quiet for a few days, and, in the meanwhile, we will devise new plans for raising money. I know of one means that I have often thought of."

"Name it, my friend!"

"It is dangerous."

"Name it, nevertheless. No matter about the danger, provided I raise money."

"Well, then," said Mohammed, deliberately, "it seems unjust to me that our people should bear the burden of taxation alone! Why should not a tax be imposed on the Franks and Levantines also?"

"On the foreigner?" said Bardissi, with a start. "That has never been done, that I am aware of."

"Then let it be done now for the first time. They have been allowed to accumulate wealth here, without bearing any of the burdens of government."

"You are right: it should be done. My defterdar shall take the necessary steps at once. The Levantines and Franks shall be made to pay this very day, and your soldiers shall have the money."

Bardissi hastily departed to give the necessary instructions.

Mohammed Ali returned slowly to his house, a complacent smile on his countenance. "Only continue in your present course, and you will soon fall into the pit I have dug for you and yours. Proceed! Your new tax will create quite a sensation!"

He was right. The new tax did create a sensation.

Bardissi's officials flew from house to house, levying a contribution of five hundred sequins from each Frank and Levantine.

Their demands were met everywhere with violent opposition, and caused general dismay. All the consuls repaired to the citadel, to Bardissi, to protest, in the names of their respective countries, against this unexpected outrage. Bardissi turned a deaf ear to their protests and entreaties. He thought only of his empty coffers, and of the necessity of paying the soldiers on the following day. Nothing could induce him to retract his action. The collection of the tax was enforced, and the money extorted from the foreigners. The consuls, however, incensed at the outrage, and resolved not to submit to such treatment, left Cairo in a body, followed by their entire households, to repair to Alexandria to take up their residence there. But, during the night preceding their departure, the French consul had a long private conference with Mohammed Ali.

What passed at this interview no one knew. At daybreak Mohammed accompanied the consul to the door of his house, and, in taking leave of him, said in a low voice: "Only wait. The fruit is ripe and will soon fall. Tell Courschid Pacha I am working for him, and am still the sultan's faithful servant. Though it seem otherwise, I am still working for him.

Be assured, I shall act promptly when the time for action comes."

On the following morning the defterdar gave the troops half their pay, the sum raised by the tax imposed on the foreigners not being sufficient to liquidate the whole amount. The soldiers, however, were not satisfied with receiving half their pay, and went away grumbling. This gave only temporary relief, and soon the whole army was dissatisfied, clamoring for pay and ripe for revolt.

New taxes had to be imposed, and the burden fell upon the hapless people. The tax-gatherers made their circuit again, and mercilessly collected the tax, in spite of the opposition and lamentations of the sorely-oppressed people. If they refused to pay, the amount was raised by selling their houses. The enraged, despairing people no longer grumbled, but rushed howling and crying in dense masses to the Mosque El-Ayar, declaring that they would rather die than longer endure such outrages.

The monster—rebellion—raises its head again, and the uproar of revolt resounds through all Cairo.

The cadis and sheiks hasten to the mosque to use their influence in tranquillizing the people, but in vain. The only response to their representations is, "We cannot, we will not pay more!"

The vast hall of the mosque resounds with their lamentations and cries of rage. Suddenly Mohammed Ali, followed by a few of his soldiers, appears on the threshold. In a loud voice he begs the people to disperse; in Bardissi's name he promises that the collection of the new tax shall not be enforced. He had gone to Bardissi and entreated him to torment the people no longer, and Bardissi had yielded to his entreaties.

"Repair quietly to your homes, and fear no longer for your property. I interceded for you, and Bardissi gave me his solemn promise that the tax should not be enforced."

The spacious mosque resounds with shouts of delight. The people cry, "Long live Mohammed Ali!" All rush forward to grasp his hand and assure him of their friendship and devotion.

Mohammed feels that he has won the people by his shrewd course. Those who meet him in the streets salute him with reverence and devotion, and call down blessings on his head. When they meet the Mameluke beys, they look down and knit their brows; they have made themselves odious to the people, and are hourly becoming more and more detested by them.

The thunder-clouds are gathering rapidly on the heads of the Mameluke beys. They see the coming storm in the angry looks of those who approach them; they feel it in the solitude that surrounds them. Curses are invoked upon their heads by the people, and not blessings, as upon Mohammed Ali's head.

Mohammed quietly prepares for the future; nothing is left to accident. No unlooked-for event must break in upon his plans, and destroy him with the rest. Let the fruit fall when ripe, and fall so deep into the abyss that no hand can pluck it thence!

The consuls have left Cairo, but after a few days the French consul returns secretly to the city, accompanied by the chief secretary of the governor, Courschid Pacha; at night and disguised, they glide stealthily through the streets of Cairo. They repair to the house of Mohammed Ali, and remain there in earnest and eager conversation with the sarechsme throughout the entire night. And again, as on the occasion of a former conference, the consul takes his departure before the dawn of day.

The governor's secretary remains with Mohammed. He still has a document to present to him, and Mohammed's eyes sparkle as he reads it.

"I have but one further request to make of his excellency."

"What is it, sarechsme? I am instructed to comply with your wishes in all things."

"I only wish to read the firman to Cousrouf myself."

"Let it be as you desire, sarechsme. If you ask this as a reward for your faithful services, it is a petty one indeed; you are, however, I believe, soon to receive a much greater one. When Courschid enters Cairo, he will appoint you a pacha of two tails."

Mohammed hastily averted his face, and made no reply. No one should see that the intelligence made him rejoice.

The fruit is ripe and ready to fall; the time for action has come.

On the following morning, a body of soldiers marches out and surrounds the quarter of the city in which the Mameluke beys reside.

Bardissi and Ismaïl have both left the citadel, and now dwell in the city. There they can live more comfortably and conveniently than up in the citadel; and the Mameluke beys are in the habit of attaching more importance to their comfort than the rest of the world. The quarter in which they reside is completely surrounded by soldiers. They do not notice it, however; these grand gentlemen are taking their ease in their palaces.

Bardissi is in his harem. He has consoled himself for Sitta Nefysseh's cruelty and coldness; the beautiful Georgian and Circassian slaves that throng his harem well know how to make him forget the past with their songs and dances, their sweet words and soft looks.

There he lies on his cushions, gazing dreamily at their dancing.

Suddenly a shot is heard, then a second follows, and a ball strikes the wall of his house.

Bardissi bounds from his cushions, and the dance is at an end. He rushes out into the court-yard to learn the cause of the firing. The street and square are filled with soldiers, and on the opposite side of the square, in front of the arsenal, whole batteries are in position, as though a battle were to be fought.

"What does this mean? Who has led these troops against us? Are those not Albanians and Armenians?"

A loud, a fearful cry resounds from Bardissi's lips: "Those are Mohammed Ali's troops, and it is he who is leading them against us. It is he who has planned my destruction. Then let us also prepare for battle ourselves. They shall see that Bardissi is not so easily trapped. Let us defend ourselves in this house as in a fortress. Close all the doors and gates.

Quick, ye soldiers, prepare for battle ! Ye cannoneers, do your duty !"

He calls to the cannoneers who stand by the guns crowning the wall that surrounds his house. But the cannoneers refuse to obey him.

Another loud cry escapes Bardissi's lips. Now he understands Mohammed's action, and knows why the troops were relieved, others sent to his palace a few days before, and why a new body-guard had been assigned him.

These are Mohammed's men, and they now refuse obedience to Bardissi.

He now comprehends Mohammed's whole scheme, and his heart is filled with anguish and immeasurable wrath.

"Alas ! Nothing is left me but to flee. Come, my Mamelukes. Load the dromedaries with the treasure ; let the women enter the carriages. Quick, we must act with the speed of lightning. You, my faithful Youssouf, you will stand by me as you stood by Mourad."

"I will fight beside you while life lasts."

All is now activity. The dromedaries are laden with treasure, with chests of gold and silver coins, with jewelry, Persian carpets, furs, and silken garments. The women enter the closed carriages ; the eunuchs take their place beside them. Now Bardissi mounts his war-horse, beside him his best and truest friend, Youssouf, and many others of his faithful followers.

The Mamelukes now throw open the gates, and with uplifted swords, ready for the conflict, sally forth from the court-yard.

The soldiers who have surrounded the palace see with wonder the gates open, Bardissi and his followers as they rush forth, the heavily-laden dromedaries, and the carriages filled with women. The conflict begins, a fierce conflict, the musketry rattles, and carries death into the ranks of both.

Erect on his war-horse Bardissi leads the van. He fights his way through, his sword mows down the enemy like the scythe of death. Youssouf, his faithful kachef, rides beside him. Like Bardissi, he fights like a lion, and hews with his trusty sword a pathway through the enemy's ranks. But suddenly a well-aimed ball strikes him, he reels in his saddle, and falls with a low moan to the earth, while Bardissi and his men press on.

He succeeds in fighting his way out of the city. Onward the whole train flies toward Gheezeh.

Bardissi is wounded; his right hand bleeds, and blood is streaming down his cheeks. Bardissi is wounded, yet he lives, and is saved. On they press, and now they are no longer followed.

The soldiers have still much to do in Cairo. Let Bardissi flee with his richly-laden dromedaries; let him depart from Cairo with his Mamelukes; but let him return no more.

He draws rein now that the city is behind him; he looks back, and a tear trickles down his cheek and mingles with his blood.

For whom was this tear?

He looks back toward Cairo, and murmurs: "O Mohammed, that you have betrayed me; this is bitter!"

He then turns his horse and they proceed in their flight.—Yes, there is still much work to be done in Cairo. It is not only Bardissi who has to be fought and driven out; there is Ismaïl, the chief of all the Mamelukes, and all the other beys. All this lordly game is to be chased and driven to bay to-day, and then there are rich spoils to be gathered. Bardissi has hardly quitted his house when the soldiers rush into it, and begin to plunder and destroy after a fashion that can hardly be surpassed by the Mamelukes themselves. The soldiers intend to pay themselves for that which Bardissi owes them.

And they do pay themselves. Bardissi possesses not only this but other houses in Cairo, and the soldiers plunder them all, leaving nothing behind but the bare walls.

They then fall upon Ismaïl Bey; but he, too, succeeds in cutting his way through the enemy. With him escape almost all the Mameluke beys with their followers. They flee far out of Cairo, into the open country.

At Gheezeh, on the verge of the desert, the Mamelukes lay encamped on the following day, and there the beys were assembled around their hero, Bardissi, in a sad consultation.

True, they are safe, yet they feel that their rule in Cairo is at an end, to be restored no more.

"At an end is the rule of the Mamelukes!" cries the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, triumphantly. In the night he sends out messengers requesting the cadis and sheiks to come to him, as he has important intelligence to communicate, and a firman sent to him by the grand-sultan to read to them. The cadis and sheiks hasten to obey his call.

In Mohammed's apartment they find Courschid Pacha's chief secretary, who reads the grand-sultan's firman to them in a loud voice.

The firman appointed Courschid Pacha Viceroy of Egypt and Governor of Cairo, and commanded all the authorities to obey and serve with humility and devotion the representative of their grand master, who would arrive in Cairo on the following day, to take possession of the fortress and receive the oaths of the officials.

The cadis and sheiks express themselves ready to obey the new governor in all things, and express the hope that with his highness's entrance into Cairo a new era of peace may dawn for their bleeding land.

They then withdraw to proclaim what has taken place to the people at the mosque on the following morning, and to exhort them to be peaceful and obedient.

Mohammed, however, repaired to the citadel, accompanied by a bim bashi and two servants, who lead two asses that seemed to be equipped for a journey. On arriving at the citadel, Mohammed left the others in the court-yard, and ascended alone to the apartment where Cousrouf was confined. He was asleep when Mohammed entered. He stood still on the threshold for a moment, gazing at his prisoner.

"Wake up, Cousrouf! wake up, thou Viceroy of Egypt, wake up!"

Cousrouf starts and stares at him.

"What is it? Who calls me?"

"Your devoted servant, the sarechsme by your grace, Mohammed Ali, calls you."

"I know by your voice that you have come to kill me!" cried Cousrouf, springing to his feet.

Mohammed slowly shook his head.

"Had I desired your death, you would long since have stood before Allah's throne, to render an account of your crimes. No, Cousrouf, I have not come to kill you, but to read to you a message from the grand-sultan at Stamboul."

Cousrouf bowed his head.

"You mean my condemnation. Were it an acknowledgment of my right and a restoration to authority, Mohammed Ali would not have come to announce it. Read!"

The sarechsme unfolded the paper, and read in a loud voice the firman which deposed Cousrouf from the office of viceroy.

"For he has performed its duties badly, and not proved worthy of our favor. He has been vanquished by rebels, and has sought safety in flight, instead of dying in the fulfilment of his duty. Humiliated and disgraced, he has been brought a prisoner to the palace in which he once ruled. Cousrouf is entirely unworthy of the honors conferred on him, and is hereby deposed from his office and dignities, and forbidden ever to present himself before the grand-sultan, or to show himself at Stamboul in the holy empire of the grand-sultan. He is banished and exiled from the empire, and his name must never be mentioned in the hearing of the grand-sultan. He is to be conveyed to the fort built on the island of Imbro, there to remain until he dies. Such are the commands of the grand-sultan, his gracious master."

When Mohammed finishes reading, profound silence ensues. Cousrouf utters no word in reply. He stands there, motionless, pale as a corpse, staring at Mohammed. He seems to be still listening to the words he has heard, to the fearful announcement of his fall and disgrace.

"To Imbro you go," said Mohammed Ali, after a pause. "Do you remember Imbro?"

No word comes from Cousrouf's pale lips; he slowly shakes his head.

"Imbro is a little island, opposite Cavalla, and for the selection of this place you are indebted to me, Cousrouf. Do you know why I selected it? From the windows of your prison you can see Cavalla, the bay, and the Ear of Bucephalus. From there you can see the sea and the coast, can see the place where on that night the poor boy lay on the shore, also the place where Masa sank beneath the waves. You shall see this place, Cousrouf. I know your gaze will often turn in that direction, and I know you will think of me when you look at the coast, Cousrouf. Your life shall be an everlasting remorse. This is my revenge, Cousrouf. Throughout the remainder of your life your recollections shall torment you, and you shall gaze upon the place where Masa died, and where you made of the innocent boy a hard-hearted man. At Imbro you shall live, Cousrouf, and I shall take care that you sometimes hear of me there, and learn what has become of the boy who lay stretched out on the shore, his heart torn with anguish, while you caused that which he held dearest on earth to be sunk in the cold grave of the waves. This is our last meeting, yet you shall often hear of me, and this I tell you in advance: Cousrouf Pacha, where you stood in your power and magnificence, there shall Mohammed Ali stand. He will, however, be more powerful than you were, and no one shall deal with him as he has dealt with you. No one shall depose him from his place, be assured of this, and remember it in your solitude at Imbro. Bear my greeting to Cavalla, to the yellow shore, and to Masa's deep, blue grave. And now I have nothing more to say to you. I shall send up the bim bashi who is to conduct you to Alexandria, and accompany you on the ship to your home at Imbro. Farewell!"

He turns and hastily leaves the room, without looking again at Cousrouf, who stands there motionless and deathly pale.

On ascending and unlocking the door of Cousrouf's prison, the bim bashi sees him stretched out on the floor, pale and motionless. Is he dead? Has the terrible blow destroyed him?

It were well for Cousrouf if he were dead! But no; he lives! He had only for the moment found relief in insensibility from the consciousness of humiliation and disgrace.

He returns to consciousness, is led down to the courtyard, mounted on his ass, and conducted by the bim bashi and the slaves to Alexandria. From there he is transported in the vessel, that lies in readiness, across the sea to Imbro, to the citadel, from whose windows he can see Cavalla, the water, and the place where he buried Masa beneath the cold, blue waves.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOVE UNTO DEATH.

On the afternoon of this fearful day, all was again restored to quiet in the streets of Cairo. The terror-stricken inhabitants had again ventured forth from their houses, and were standing in groups, discussing in subdued voices the events of the day. But they ceased conversing when they now saw the cadi approaching on horseback, and in advance of him the public crier. In the cadi's name he proclaimed to the people a general amnesty for all past offences: "The new viceroy is to enter the city on the morrow. Let the city put on festive attire, and let a hearty welcome be extended him. Remove from the streets and houses all traces of conflict and bloodshed. Bury your dead, and care for your wounded, ye wives of the Mameluke beys and the kachefs. Do your duty, ye women and ye servants."

These orders of the cadi were proclaimed throughout the entire city by the crier.

But now the veiled women come out into the streets with their servants, and, in obedience to the prophet's injunctions, seek the wounded and suffering, take them to their houses, and care for them tenderly.

Many of the dead and wounded lie in front of Bardissi's palace—men who had stood faithfully by their master, and fallen bravely in the discharge of duty.

A number of women approach this place. Veiled like the rest is she who precedes the others; yet her royal bearing, and the deference shown her by the servants and Mamelukes who accompany her, proclaim her to be Sitta Nefysseh. She is performing her woman's duty of seeking out and caring for the wounded. She stoops down over the bodies that lie stretched out on the earth, and suddenly a cry escapes her lips—a single cry ; she then beckons to the servants, who have followed them with stretchers, for the transport of the unfortunate. She gazes in mute horror at the Mameluke bey who lies there, weltering in his blood, a fearful wound on his forehead, that almost renders his features irrecognizable. She, however, distinguishes her lover, and commands her servants to place him on the stretcher. With her own hands she binds up his wound, and covers his countenance with the white cloths handed her by her women. She then orders her servants to carry the Mameluke bey to her house, and directs her women to continue their search for the wounded.

She walks beside the stretcher on which the wounded man lies. He does not move ; he lies there insensible, unconscious of what is taking place.

Perhaps Sitta Nefysseh is only conveying a corpse to her house !

She has him carried up into the second story of her house. There he is laid on a mat, and with tender hands Sitta Nefysseh herself adjusts the cushions and pillows. The servants bring to his couch, in silver bowls, water and the healing ointment which Sitta Nefysseh had prepared with her own hands. With gentle touch she wipes the blood from his countenance, washes out the wound, and applies to it the ointment.

She neither weeps nor laments. Her lips are mute, and her eyes shed no tears. Is this a time to weep, when Youssouf Bey is suffering and needs her care and attention ? No, at such a time a woman must be strong. She will have time enough for tears and lamentation in her after-life.

The fearful gash on his forehead bears silent evidence of this. She has often seen similar wounds, and bound them up herself.

She well knows that Youssouf Bey is wounded unto death —that there is no hope of recovery. Yet she does not weep. With Allah all is possible, and he may be gracious. A miracle may occur ; Youssouf's youthful vigor and his heroic nature may yet vanquish Death. Perhaps her love may preserve him. Grant, merciful Allah, that it be so!

Her women now come with other injured Mamelukes, who are placed on the mats Sitta Nefysseh had caused to be spread out for them in the adjoining room.

Sitta Nefysseh forbids any one to enter the room where Youssouf lies.

"He needs repose," said she, stepping into the adjoining room to see that the other wounded were being well cared for. "Youssouf Bey needs repose. Be still, move noiselessly, and do not disturb his sleep! It may be the sleep of death. Be still, close the doors and draw the curtains, that no noise may reach him!"

It is perfectly quiet in the room where Youssouf Bey lies. Sitta Nefysseh kneels beside him. Her hands folded in silent prayer, her eyes fastened on his countenance, she bends over him and breathes her warm, glowing breath through his cold lips, to give him of her life, and bathes his cold brow with her warm tears.

Sitta Nefysseh's prayerful, tearful entreaties are heard. Youssouf Bey awakens from his death-like slumber. Love has recalled the spirit to the body. Love opens his eyes and permits him to see and recognize her who is bowed over him, regarding him with loving tenderness.

"Is it you, Sitta Nefysseh? Am I already dead, and is it a divine being that looks at me with your eyes?"

"No, my Youssouf, you live and are with me on earth!"

"Oh, it is impossible—impossible! Only a sweet illusion," whispers he, with quivering lips; his eyes close, and he falls back heavily.

But she bends over him, strokes his brow and cheek with gentle touch, and calls him loving names.

"You live," murmurs she, "oh, feel that you live, dear Youssouf. Feel it in this kiss!"

A soft tremor courses through his entire being, and his eyes open.

Yes, he lives! He is not dead! This is Nefysseh's victory over death, this is the result of the impassioned kiss impressed on the lips of her beloved.

"And is it possible, Nefysseh, you are indeed with me, and my dreams of love and bliss are realized? You with me! What can have happened? Why this wondrous change?"

He raises his hand to his forehead and touches the wound, and then he knows what has taken place; he feels it in the burning pain of his wound.

"Oh, we are lost—all lost! Tell me, Nefysseh, must I die?"

"No, you shall not die; you shall live, Youssouf, live for me."

"For thee? Oh, tell me, Nefysseh, do you, then, love me?"

She bends over him, clasps him in her arms, and lays her cheek against his.

"You ask, Youssouf? Do you not know? I have long loved, perhaps I loved you even while Mourad still lived! But I wished to know nothing of it, and I knew nothing of it. I refused to listen to the voices that whispered in my heart. And yet so blissful, so heavenly, to look at you, Youssouf, and read in your eyes the secret of your love. Yet my lips were silent, for, as Mourad's wife, I wished to remain unblamable. You loved me, and I wished to remain free from blame for your sake, too."

The tears that pour from her eyes fall upon his face—a heavenly dew that gives him new strength, new happiness.

"Speak on, Sitta Nefysseh, oh, speak on! What I hear is music! Let me hear this music and be happy! Oh, speak on, Nefysseh!"

"What shall I say, Youssouf? The whole meaning of my words is still, I love you, and have long loved you! When Mourad, my husband, died, I vowed over his dead body that I would remain true to him beyond the grave. Do you know why I wished to raise this barrier between us? I could not allow the youth to sacrifice his life for me in the blossom of his age. And, moreover, oh, fool that I was, I fancied the wide abyss that separated Mourad Bey's widow from his kachef Youssouf could never be crossed! I was proud, Youssouf, and proud for you, also! I did not wish to give any one occasion to say: 'Kachef Youssouf marries Mourad's widow for her possessions—for her wealth. She is too old for him to love her. He can only have married her for her wealth and her name.' Thus they might have spoken of the youth, of the hero I loved and adored, and for whom I would gladly have sacrificed my life."

"And to whom you were yet so cruel, Sitta Nefysseh; to whom you caused so much suffering! For I have suffered, Sitta Nefysseh. It was my heaven to be in your presence, to see you. I adored you, and yet you refused to listen to me. But let me be silent. Speak on, oh, speak on of my happiness! Tell me again that you love me, Nefysseh; I cannot believe it—it cannot be!"

"And yet it is so, Youssouf, and long have I loved you. You know not of the long, sleepless nights I have passed in my solitary chamber, my hands folded in prayer to Allah for strength and firmness. You know not how often, in the still night, I have stretched out my arms toward you, and pronounced your name with passionate longing, entreating the welis to bear you to me in their gentle arms. Yet, with the day came cold, calm reason, exhorting Mourad's widow to be firm and proud. And, alas! I was firm. You knew not what it cost me. Then, Youssouf, a new period came. The beys Bardissi and L'Elfi addressed me, covetous not only of the possession of the woman, but also of her wealth. From that hour I knew that danger threatened you, for the Mameluke beys are fierce and cruel; and, if they had known of my affection for you, my beloved, you would have been lost. This I knew, and therefore was I cold and indifferent in my manner to you. You called me unfeeling and cruel when I sent you away to battle. I was afraid it might excite suspicion if I kept you back at such a time; and then, too, I was satisfied you would make for yourself a name, which you have done, my beloved. You returned. You came with a new declaration of love, which Nefysseh rejected, because Bardissi had been with her in the self-same hour, and had renewed his addresses, and because he would never forgive you if I chose you instead of himself. And now this fearful disaster has overtaken us all! Treachery has stained our streets with blood! The Mameluke beys have left the city in wild flight! You, Youssouf Bey, have, however, remained here, and now I may tell you all, avow all that I feel and have endured and suffered in secret. I may tell you that I love you, and Allah will be merciful and gracious, Youssouf. We are united in love. The seal has fallen from my lips, and they dare proclaim what I feel. Oh, my Youssouf, there is a bright future in store for us ; you will recover, and be strong and happy ! "

"I am already well," murmured he. "All is well with me, Sitta Nefysseh, for you love me, and in your love I shall regain health and strength."

His lips cease to speak, and a tremor courses through his whole being.

"Youssouf !" cries she, in tones of anguish—"Youssouf ! Oh, stay with me, do not leave me !"

In response to her call, he opens his eyes and gives her a tender look.

"Yes, Sitta Nefysseh, I shall remain with you throughout all time, throughout eternity, for love is eternal."

His lips are hushed, but his eyes still gaze up at her, for a moment, with the lustre of life ; then they grow dim and cold, and slowly the veil of death sinks down over his countenance. The lips that but now spoke the words, "I love you," are hushed forever !

Bowed down over him, her eyes fixed intently on the features from which the last traces of life are vanishing, she sees the kiss that Death has imprinted on his lips, and the last smile slowly fade from his countenance.

And again she neither weeps nor laments ; she only tears the veil from her head with a wild, despairing movement, and lays it over the countenance of her beloved dead.

"Sleep, Youssouf, sleep beneath my veil ! You are dead, and my happiness dies with you—I shall be a living monument to your memory ! I shall live in poverty and solitude, Youssouf, and the treasures which you buried for me beneath the earth shall remain there, a subterranean monument to my love. They shall never see the light of day ! You have buried my treasures, and I will bury my greatest, holiest treasure—you, Youssouf Bey ; and with you Sitta Nefysseh buries her youth, her love, and her grandeur, to be henceforth only a poor widow who lives in solitary retirement, a prey to sorrow. Sleep, Youssouf Bey! You will awake with me above, to an eternal life—sleep, Youssouf!"

She lifts the veil once more, and kisses the forehead, now cold as marble; she then replaces it softly, and leaves the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

COURSCHID PACHA.

A NEW viceroy is enthroned in Cairo, the viceroy Courschid Pacha, and it is again the old story of wars, want of money, and oppression of the people.

Courschid Pacha! What is he but a continuation of all the other viceroys, governors, and caimacans who have ruled in Cairo since Egypt has belonged to the Turkish empire? New taxes, new extortion, and new wars. For the Mameluke beys have assembled on the plain of Gheezeh and formed new plans, recruited their ranks with Arabians and Nubians, and prepared to take the field against the rulers in Cairo, and above all against their most hated enemy, the pacha Mohammed Ali.

Such was the dignity conferred upon Mohammed by Courschid Pacha, upon his entrance into Cairo, in the name of the grand-sultan.

It is not to war against Courschid Pacha that the Mamelukes are assembling their forces. To destroy Mohammed Ali, the soldier-king, the real ruler in Cairo, is their aim; and, in order to accomplish this, they even humble themselves before the viceroy, who is already involved in a conflict with Mohammed. They seek to treat with him, and with the grand-admiral of the Turkish fleet, sent by the Sublime Porte to Alexandria to restore peace to the distracted country. To him, the grand-admiral, the Mameluke beys address a letter offering their services:

"The undersigned, knowing that your highness has come to Egypt to put an end to the anarchy that prevails, offer, in the name of all the beys, to unite their forces with those of

Courschid Pacha, and to assist him and your highness in all you may do and undertake, provided Mohammed Ali and the Albanians be driven from the country."

This proposition receives the approval of Courschid Pacha, who hates Mohammed as heartily as the Mamelukes do! Mohammed is the people's idol. To him they apply for relief from oppression, and, whenever there is any thing to be demanded of the viceroy, it is Mohammed, supported by the cadis and sheiks, who loudly demands that right and justice be done. Merely this: "Right and justice!" But this it is that Courschid cannot accord them. He cannot accord right and justice, he who is always in want and danger, he who is suffering with the disease that has so long cursed the viceroys of Egypt—want of money. When money is needed, it must be had, even if extorted from the inhabitants of Cairo and its vicinity. And Mohammed often interposes and prevents Courschid from executing his money-raising schemes.

Courschid Pacha, incensed by this interference, complains to the sultan at Stamboul, and requests that the sarechsme, Mohammed Ali, be relieved from duty at Cairo, and assigned to duty elsewhere. At the same time, in order to make himself independent of the Albanians, who are wholly under the influence of Mohammed Ali, he causes a body of troops to be brought to Cairo for himself, a body of *Delis*, wild, lawless troops, who carry terror and dismay wherever they go. These Delis are now seen in Egypt for the first time; the viceroy treats them tenderly, and Courschid, who has money for no one else, has money for his Delis; and when he has none, he delivers over to their mercy some village in the vicinity of Cairo, out of which they pay themselves by pillage.

At last a day came when the people, so long bowed down in the dust, arose like a lion, and refused to yield longer to such oppression.

"We will endure this no more; we will submit to this injustice and oppression no longer!"

The cadis and sheiks repair to the citadel to announce the determination of the people to the viceroy.

"The people refuse to submit further to this oppression. Neither they nor we will endure it."

They say this to his face, proudly, fearlessly. He replies fiercely: "I will hurl death into your midst if the people are not brought back to humility and obedience, for I am your master—I alone!"

"You are our master while we recognize you as such, and no longer," replied the cadi, turning and leaving the room, followed by the sheiks.

In the streets below he announces to the people: "Justice is not to be obtained of Courschid Pacha, and we will submit to him no more!"

"No, we can and will not submit," say the cadi and sheiks, who, accompanied by thousands of the people, have repaired to the palace of the sarechsme.

"We announce to you, Mohammed Ali, in the name of the whole people, we will recognize and obey Courschid Pacha no longer. This man's cruelty and injustice are no longer to be endured."

"We declare him removed from his office; we declare him deposed from the throne," cried the cadi, solemnly; and the sheiks repeat the cry: "We declare him removed from his office; we declare him deposed from the throne!"

And in the streets without, the people shout exultingly: "We declare him deposed from the throne!"

Mohammed listens to these unusual outcries, and his countenance is grave and solemn.

"You depose him from the throne, O cadi! But whom will you put in his place?"

He asks the question slowly and quietly, and no one knows how wildly his heart throbs within him. He is aware that the crisis is at hand, and that what he has dreamed of since his boyhood, and worked and toiled for during four long years, is now about to be decided. "Whom will you put in his place?"

"Yourself, Mohammed Ali!" cried the cadi, solemnly. "Yes; you must rule in Courschid Pacha's stead, for we are convinced that your aim will be the welfare of the people."

"Me!" said Mohammed Ali, recoiling a step as if startled, and the pallor which overspread his face could have been caused by alarm as well as by joy.

"No, it is impossible, you cannot select me; I am not worthy of so great an honor."

"You are worthy of this honor, and the people invest you with it through me," cried the cadi. "Come, Mohammed Ali, Caimacan of Cairo, our governor and master! I proclaim you to be such, in the name of the people."

While Mohammed silently shakes his head, the cadi hastily throws open the wide doors that lead out upon the balcony of the house, steps out and proclaims, in such loud tones that the assembled thousands who fill the spacious square can hear him:

"Courschid Pacha is deposed, and we elect Mohammed Ali Pacha to be our governor! Is this your will?"

"It is our will!" shout the populace, exultingly. "Courschid is deposed, and Mohammed Ali is our governor! Long live Mohammed Ali!"

His head bowed down on his breast, Mohammed stands listening to the grateful words: "Long live Mohammed Ali!"

The cadi re-enters the apartment. "You have heard their voice! Now show yourself to the people. They have chosen you. Step out upon the balcony with us, that they may salute you."

"It shall be as you say," said he, after a pause. "The people call me, and I will greet them. May Allah assist me in advancing their welfare!"

The cadi takes his hand and leads him out. Without, the assembled thousands shout exultingly: "Long live our new governor! Our caimacan! Our viceroy! Long live Mohammed Ali Pacha!"

These strains resound so loudly through the city, that they reach the citadel. Everywhere in the streets exulting voices cry: "Courschid Pacha is deposed, and Mohammed Ali is our governor!"

"I am alone viceroy here in Cairo," is the burden of a missive penned by Courschid in the citadel, and sent down by him to the cadi and sheiks. "I alone am viceroy. Upon me the grand-sultan at Stamboul has conferred this dignity, and a message will soon come from our master announcing to you his decision with regard to the rebel, Mohammed Ali. Until then I will assert my authority, and I appeal to all faithful subjects, and to all who do not wish to hazard their future with the rebels, and to perish with them, to rally to the support of their lawful ruler."

And large numbers did so, many fearing, no doubt, the decision expected from Stamboul.

But Mohammed was undaunted, and besieged the citadel of Cairo with his faithful Albanians.

The bloody struggle arose between the besiegers and the besieged. The cannon thundered death and destruction into the city, and, when vigorous sorties occurred, the conflict sometimes surged far down into the streets. But finally, after four days of fierce fighting, the expected message arrived from Stamboul, and an unexpected one it proved to be, to the viceroy, Courschid Pacha.

The grand-vizier had sent one of his confidants with the *capidgi bashi*, with instructions to investigate, and make himself thoroughly acquainted with the state of things, and learn who was right, and who wrong; and the capidgi, and his associate, had done so; and now, upon their arrival in Cairo, they summoned the cadi and sheiks, and announced to them, and to Mohammed Ali, the firman of the grand-sultan: "Mohammed Ali is confirmed in his office of Governor of Cairo and Viceroy of Egypt; and the deposed viceroy, Courschid Pacha, is ordered to repair to Alexandria, there to await the further orders of his master."

A copy of this firman is sent up to the citadel, and Courschid commanded to surrender the fortress, and leave the city immediately. He at first declined to surrender, and demanded an interview with the capidgi bashi and his associate. This was, however, refused him, and he was at last compelled to yield, and give up the citadel. Through the little side-gate that leads down to the Nile, Courschid, accompanied by a few faithful followers, left the citadel, and was conveyed in boats, that lay in readiness, down the river to Boulak. From there, after a brief sojourn, he continued his journey to Alexandria, and then on to Stamboul.

While Courschid is descending the secret stairway to leave the citadel, Mohammed Ali and his warriors are ascending the hill in triumph, marching to the strains of stirring military music. The garrison of the fortress lay down their arms, and all cry, exultingly: "Long live Mohammed Ali, our new viceroy!" He still hears it as he enters the grand apartment where Courschid has been in the habit of receiving him. He still hears it as he steps out upon the wall of the fortress, and looks down upon the wondrous city, at the Nile, at the palm-trees on the green shore beyond, and at the yellow desert, on whose verge the pyramids tower aloft.

"Long live our new viceroy, Mohammed Ali!"

This cry resounds from a thousand voices, and Mohammed gazes out upon the beautiful, heavenly world that is now his own, and an ecstasy that almost makes his heart stand still, possesses his soul.

"Long live the Viceroy of Egypt!"

"I have reached my goal. I am the viceroy. They greet me with shouts of joy, and wish me a long life. I will endeavor to reward them. Poor, bleeding Egypt, shall progress under my rule. I will endeavor to bring prosperity and happiness to those who have suffered so much. This I swear, by Allah! I will raise this poor land up out of the dust. Yes, I swear it, by Allah!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE TENT.

PEACE and tranquillity prevail at last.—For the present, at least, the people enjoy blessings to which they have long been strangers, and it is to the new viceroy and his beneficent rule that they owe these blessings. He has signalized the beginning of his rule by compelling the lawless horde of Delis, called by Courschid his body-guard, to return to the interior of Africa. He has also brought back into subjection the Armenians and Albanians, who, carried away by the war-fury, had, for a period, laughed at all order and discipline. Though mild and gentle toward the devoted and obedient, Mohammed is severe and cruel to the disobedient and defiant.

Many heads have fallen in these first days of his rule. The head of many a wild soldier, who paid for his mutinous or riotous behavior with his life, adorns the wall of the citadel, a warning to the enemies of law and order.

This warning is not lost on the other soldiers, and on the secret adherents of the Mamelukes; it teaches them to conform to circumstances and bow their heads in submission. The Mamelukes themselves are far distant from Cairo, and lie encamped near Minieh, equipping and disciplining their forces, and preparing to renew the struggle.

The viceroy, however, has a strong arm, and his power increases daily. He will bring them also into submission.

The people who pass the palace occupied by Mohammed as sarechsme, stand still, and gaze with curiosity at the changes and alterations being made there. Large numbers of laborers are engaged in repairing the injuries sustained by the building in the recent conflicts; in setting out trees and shrubbery in the garden, and in adorning it with rare flowers. Great improvements are progressing in the wing of the building whose windows open on the garden.

Artistically carved lattice-work and shutters are being affixed to the lofty windows of the second story. And the curious, who observe this, give each other a sly look, and smile. They understand the significance of these shutters. These are the shutters of the windows of a harem, and they proclaim that Mohammed is now also occupied with other than affairs of state. The people rejoice in these harem windows, for they are a guarantee of peace. When the warrior builds a harem, it proves that he himself believes in the stability of peace, and the new order of things. And the new viceroy does.

In discussing these matters, the people who stand in front of the palace of the Esbekieh tell each other that the viceroy has sent a messenger to his distant home beyond the sea, where his first wife and children live, and has sent them word to come to him. "They will come by water!" relates one of them, "and that is why the *dehabieh* is being built at Boulak. It is like a magnificent saloon, and is to be beautifully adorned —the walls hung with velvet, and the floor covered with costly Persian carpets. The viceroy's first wife and his children will come up from Alexandria in this dehabieh."

"His first wife?" exclaims another. "You speak of his first. Has he then other wives?"

The person addressed then assumes a mysterious air, as if to intimate that he is in the viceroy's confidence, and quite accurately informed as to the number of his wives. "It is not known," says he, hesitatingly; "it is, however, well known that a harem has been constructed at the citadel, and that here also the apartments in the wing of the palace are to be arranged as a harem."

"One wife hardly requires two harems, I should fancy!" they all laughingly repeat; "by Allah, one wife has no need of two harems, and the viceroy must therefore have, as the prophet allows, more than one wife."

But no one knows it; and Mohammed takes care to be silent concerning his private life. He is reticent in such matters, and only talkative when in conference with his ministers and government officials, and most so when conversing with Hassan, his minister of finance, on which occasions he is often compelled to hear that the treasury is unfortunately almost empty, and that new means of replenishing it must be devised.

Money is scarce, but none is spared in decorating the apartments at the citadel, and below in the palace of the Esbekieh.

The apartments in the citadel destined to be the harem of the viceroy's wife, as well as the other apartments of the palace, are being splendidly furnished.

The upper apartments, now that they are completed, the viceroy inspects alone; through the others he walks beside his faithful friend Hassan, pointing out with complacency the beauties of the long suite of elegantly-furnished apartments.

"And do you know who is to occupy these rooms, Hassan?" asked Mohammed, his countenance assuming a more mild and kindly expression than Hassan had ever before observed in the usually stern and severe features of his master.

"It is said the viceroy has sent for his sons," replied Hassan, "and I therefore suppose that they are to live here."

"And your supposition is right, my friend," replied the viceroy, smiling. "Yes, here my dear sons will live, my three boys. Yet they must be almost young men by this time. Let me see, five years have passed since I saw them. They must have changed very much in this time, Hassan, and I confess my heart yearns for them. Do you think they will know me?"

"You are not changed, master," replied Hassan. "Just as you look now, you looked on that day, you know, the day at Aboukir, when I saw you for the first time."

"I know, we met there for the first time, and you are the only friend that has stood beside me faithfully since that day. The only one, too, Hassan, in whom I confide, and may Allah grant that you stand beside me through life!"

"Yes, may Allah grant that my enemies may never succeed in making you distrust me. For this I know, I shall remain faithful to you until death; and malice and calumny alone can succeed in alienating from me my master's confidence."

"Hassan," said the viceroy, looking at him earnestly, "I do not listen to calumny, and, whatever I hear, I do not believe it unless I recognize it as truth. You will be often calumniated, my friend; that I well know. But this I promise you: whatever evil is said of you I will repeat to you, to enable you to justify yourself, and then woe to those who have the temerity to calumniate you!"

The viceroy has shown the beautiful apartments of the citadel to his friend Hassan, but the apartments in the palace of the Esbekieh he shows to no one; through them he wanders alone. The saloons and chambers are not yet finished; he carefully observes them as he walks along, noting whether his instructions are being complied with. Now he has entered the immense saloon, situated at the end of the apartments of the harem. He locks the door behind him; here no one must see him; to this sanctuary no human eye must follow him.

At the entrance he stands still and looks around. A wondrous change has come over him. He smiles, and his countenance is still more radiant than when he spoke with Hassan of his sons. His eyes sparkle like those of a youth who beholds again the countenance of his beloved.

The saloon is curiously furnished. Nothing splendid, nothing beautiful is to be seen. Simple mats cover the floor, such mats, woven of long straw by the fellahs, as adorn the harems of the poorer class of people in Cairo. There are no divans, but only low cushions covered with plain woolen cloth, no costly hangings, no mirrors on the walls; they are hung with gray linen, as though they were the sides of a gigantic tent, and in the middle of this immense space there really stands a tent—a large one made of white cloth, patched with colored rags of every description, such a tent as the Bedouin chiefs of the desert dwell in.

Any one entering this immense space, after passing through the glittering apartments of the harem, would have been strangely and mysteriously affected by its appearance.

But Mohammed is not so affected. He steps in noiselessly, as if fearing to disturb the repose of some one.

Is any one reposing there?

Not yet; but the time, it is to be hoped, will soon come when this tent shall no longer be unoccupied as now.

Mohammed steps forward, draws back the curtain, and enters the first apartment of the tent.

How plain it is, how desolate and bare! On the mat in the corner, however, lie cushions, and spread over them a shawl adorned with tassels, the cover for the person who is to sleep there; there stands also a stool, and on it lies a tray, which contains various articles of table-ware, such as dishes, plates, and pitchers.

It all looks extremely plain, but, when viewed more closely, it is observed that, beneath this simplicity, splendor is concealed. When the shawl is raised, it is discovered that the other side is of heavy crimson velvet, inworked with gold, and bordered with pearls. When the tray that lies on the stool is examined, it is found to be of solid silver, and of great value, though unpolished and rough; and the cups, dishes, and other articles, prove to be of richly-worked gold, set with precious stones, and placed as if in jest in plain, wooden forms. Mohammed examines all these things with a smile of satisfaction, and murmurs to himself: "Yes, yes, it was just so. The first apartment presented just this appearance."

He now draws back the curtain that opens into the second apartment, and it seems to him he hears now as then a sweet voice say: "The second apartment is for the women, and no man is ever allowed to enter it. I will conduct you into that apartment, and there I beg you to remain."

The second apartment, where Butheita lived, was just like this. There lay the cushions on which her lovely form reposed at night. Just so was the woollen cover with its white and brown stripes, and like these were the little red shoes that stood beside her couch there. Only those were of leather and these were of red velvet, and sparkled with precious stones. When raised, it was found that the other side of this woollen cover, like that in the other apartment, was also of splendid material, richly worked and adorned with gems. There was nothing else here but a small chest that stood in a remote corner, as in Butheita's tent. In that she kept the little ornaments, purchased for her in Tantah by her father, articles of jewelry found in the sand of the desert, and which had perhaps been worn by a daughter of the Pharaohs, and gems that had been taken from the grave of some mummy, where they had lain for thousands of years. Outwardly the chest that stood in the corner looked like the other, but it contained treasures of a different nature; a costly necklace of pearls, buckles of enormous value, and a diadem, so lustrous that it seemed as though Mohammed had stolen stars from heaven with which to adorn his love.

As he stands there absorbed in the contemplation of these articles, a feeling of unutterable bliss comes over him, of happiness unknown to him for many long years.

Yes, unknown to him for long years, for very many have elapsed since Masa died. Since the time when he prepared the subterranean grotto for Masa, he has never until now experienced such ecstasy. He steps out, closes the curtains, and surveys every thing once more, and smiles his approval.

"Now I go for your mistress," murmured he, as he turns and walks toward the door. But at the door he suddenly stands still. He feels that this is not the countenance of the viceroy, of a ruler, but that of a happy man. Such a countenance he must, however, not exhibit to the world; no one must see that the ruler, perplexed and weighed down with the cares of state, can sometimes forget that he is a ruler, and become for a moment a happy man. When he steps out his countenance wears its usual grave and severe expression.

On the evening of this day, the viceroy leaves the citadel for a short time. He wishes to repose for a few days in his house on the shore of the Nile, opposite Boulak, in the house he had caused to be built when he was sarechsme, and to which he had given the name Salam-lyk.

A single servant, Achmed, accompanies the viceroy to Salam-lyk, where he proposes to enjoy a little rest from the cares of state, as he is in the habit of doing from time to time.

Upon his arrival at Salam-lyk, he calls Achmed to his apartment, confers with him for a long time, and gives him instructions with regard to something he wishes him to do. Achmed leaves him, mounts a swift dromedary, and rides out into the night, and Mohammed retires to rest. But he rises again with the earliest dawn, and gazes impatiently out of the window, as if expecting some one ; he smiles at himself ; he is as impatient as a young girl, or as a lover awaiting the coming of his love.

But hour after hour passes, and still he sees no one coming up the path that leads through the garden to the house. But finally, at noon, Achmed is seen approaching

Mohammed hastens out into the garden to meet him.

"Well, did you find the tent ?"

"Yes, master, the dromedary ran to it of its own accord."

"And whom did you meet at the tent ?"

"The father, master—the chief Arnhyn."

Mohammed quickly averts his face—the servant must not see that his lips quiver, that he grows pale.

"You met the chief, and he was alone ?"

"Yes, master, alone in his tent, and I conversed with him."

"What was said ? Did he speak of his daughter ? Has she followed another man to his tent ?" asked Mohammed, in such quick, passionate tones, that Achmed started and failed to understand his meaning.

"No, master, he spoke to me of his daughter, because I, as you instructed me, asked about her, yet so casually, that he could not suspect that I particularly desired to speak of her. He told me his daughter was much changed ; she had become sad and delicate, and he had therefore sent her to visit some friends at Petresin, in order that she might be thrown together with other young girls for a time, and learn to laugh and jest again. She had, however, sent her father word yesterday that she could endure it no longer, and would return home to-day. He stood at the door awaiting her, unwilling to leave his tent to go out to meet her, for fear of the thieving Bedouins that roam the desert, and who knew that his tent contained costly treasures."

"Then you suppose Butheita will return to her father's to-day?"

"I remained there until I saw her coming in the distance. The sheik's eagle-eyes recognized her in the dim distance. 'There comes my daughter, Butheita, with her friends!' he cried, joyously ; 'in an hour she will be here.' I remained some time longer, the sheik gradually becoming more and more delighted as he recognized his daughter more distinctly. 'Yes, it is Butheita!' he cried ; 'she is returning home.' Then I took my departure, master, to bring you the intelligence."

"And how long," asked Mohammed, hastily, his countenance averted—"how long do you suppose it will take to reach the sheik's tent?"

"I took, as you instructed me, master, the dromedary you recently purchased from Sheik Arnhyn. It knew the road, and flew on its way like the wind, without any guidance. I think it can be reached in two hours."

"In two hours!" repeated Mohammed. "An hour after sunset, this evening, have the dromedary in readiness, and, for yourself, the swiftest horse. At that hour we will depart."

CHAPTER XVI.

RETRIBUTION.

NIGHT has come. The Bedouin chief, Arnhyn, has retired to rest. He is to start early in the morning with others of his tribe for Tantah, to take to market the wool of their black sheep, the cloth they have woven out of it, the goat-skins, and cheese.

Butheita, also, must rise early in the morning, for she is to accompany her father, and has many little preparations to make. On the evening before, she had already done up her hair in a hundred small plaits, securing them with gold-headed pins, on some of which precious stones sparkled. The pink silk dress, the white veil, and the shoes, all lie ready for use. She has colored her finger-nails and the palms of her hands with henna; but Butheita scorns to color her face; moreover, no one is to see her face. Hitherto she had cordially detested her veil, but now she hides her countenance closely in the presence of all men.

Surprised at this, the sheik has often asked her how it happened that such a change had come over her, and that she showed herself to no one unveiled since the stranger had sojourned in their tent, as though his eyes had hurt her, and made her afraid of the gaze of men.

Butheita had only smiled mysteriously in response to his questions; she well knows, however, why she does so: she knows it is to keep sacred from the gaze of other men the countenance consecrated by his glance.

Night has come. The sheik is sleeping soundly on his mat in the first apartment of the tent, and Butheita on her cushions in the inner apartment. Deep silence prevails, interrupted only from time to time by the desert-wind as it sweeps across the plain and shakes the stakes of the tent, and makes the white canvas swell out.

Surely it was only the wind that now raised the curtain and made the canvas rustle. But it does not awaken the sheik; he is accustomed to such sounds, and sleeps so quietly that he does not see the shadow that glides cautiously into the tent, and creeps to where he lies sleeping. Without, stands another man, holding up the curtain to enable the first to see his way.

The moon throws a ray of light into the tent, and with a quick bound the man is beside the sheik, and binds his hands and feet. The sheik is now aroused ; he opens his lips to utter a cry, but a wooden gag is thrust into his mouth. He can neither cry out nor move ; he lies there perfectly helpless, looking up wrathfully at the enemy who is treating him so shamefully.

The robber's face is masked, and he can not recognize him. But a robber he assuredly is ; yes, a robber who is searching for treasure, and who well knows that the sheik possesses several little chests filled with gold-pieces, jewelry, and precious stones, and who also knows that they are kept within in Butheita's apartment. Yes, the robber knows this, for he is cautiously creeping into the second apartment. But this is not the one who bound him ; it is another. There are therefore more of them. The first, the tall man who bound him, is now waiting at the door of the tent ; the other, the smaller one, is entering the inner apartment. The sheik, powerless to prevent, sees all this as he lies bound on his mat.

Butheita still sleeps soundly. He who glides to her side regards her for a moment with an ardent, passionate glance, and then bends down and quickly binds her feet, and her hands, that lie crossed on her breast, with silken cloths. As she awakens and attempts to cry out, he quickly throws a gold-embroidered *cuffei* over her head, ties it securely around her neck, and then lifts Butheita in his arms. But, as he does so, he whispers in her ear, "Fear nothing, Butheita, no harm will be done you !"

A sudden tremor seizes her ; she thinks she recognizes this voice. But no, it is impossible. He would not come to her as a robber. No, she is mistaken. Yet she offers no resistance. And what resistance can she offer ? Her hands and feet are bound, and now she is borne out, and lifted high, and then laid down.

She does not see that she is on her own dromedary. She lies on the same cushion in the same palanquin in which she had once held the sarechsme Mohammed Ali a prisoner, and he it is who seats himself beside her. "And now onward, onward, my Alpha!"

The Nubian mounts his horse, and the swift dromedary speeds his way through the desert.

The night is clear, and the moon is shedding a golden lustre over the sand, through which the ship of the desert is flying with its rich prize, and behind it the Nubian, his hand on his pistol, ready to shoot down any one who may dare to attack his master.

Now the rider draws rein and stops the dromedary; the sublime image of the desert-queen, silvered over with the moonlight, towers before them in majestic proportions.

"This is the desert-queen, the goddess of all the Bedouins!" cries Mohammed. "Do you wish to see her, Butheita? I am sorry for you, and would gladly remove the cloth from your head and eyes in order that you may see. But if you are cruel, you might tear my arms with your teeth. Will you do that, Butheita?"

She starts and shakes her head, inwardly rejoicing, for she recognizes these words, and remembers that she spoke them when he lay a prisoner on the cushion before her. And he now continues to speak just as she spoke then:

"You shake your head, and I will trust you and loosen your bonds."

He quickly unties the cuffei and removes it from her head. She looks up at him who is bowed down over her, and the kind moon sheds her soft light upon them, and enables them to see each other.

Oh, happy moment! Forgotten is all, forgotten the long separation—forgotten, also, that her father will be angry and will grieve for her! She looks only at him, sees only him, and yet, as he now bends down closer, she turns her face aside.

Mohammed smiles and points to the sphinx. "Only look at the shadow the moon throws from the dromedary to the mouth of the sphinx! Look at the two heads there, they are our shadows, and they are kissing each other, Butheita!"

She utters a cry of delight. These were her very words, and, as then, he says, bending over her :

"Why should our shadows only kiss each other? Why not our lips, too?"

But she shakes her head and says, as she then said :

"I have promised my father to kiss only that man whom I shall follow to his tent for love. At the door of the tent he may give me the first kiss."

"And you are still resolved to keep this promise?" said he, smiling.

"I am," says she, also smiling. "And you, Mohammed, shall never kiss me!" she continues, the smile vanishing from her lips, and her countenance assuming an angry expression. "No, you shall never kiss me, for you shall never lead me to your tent as your wife! Oh, I see it all plainly. You have stolen me from my father to make me a slave!"

"Yes," said Mohammed, "I intend you to be a slave, the slave of your love! For I know you love me, Butheita!"

"No!" she exclaims. "No, I do not love you! And you have no right to make me a slave. I am the Bedouin queen ; my whole tribe call me so, and the daughters of the Bedouins have never been sold into slavery. No, I will not be a slave!"

"And yet you shall be the slave of your love!"

"I do not love you, I hate you!" replies she, crying with anger. "Yes, Mohammed Ali, I hate you, and you shall never kiss me, for I hate the robber who takes me from my father's house in order to make me a slave!"

"Butheita," says he, gently, "I removed the cloth from your lips, but you are not keeping your word ; you tear my heart with your lips, and I must cover them again if you continue to wound me so cruelly."

"Do so ; close my lips! They shall say nothing else to you!" cries she, angrily. "Do so, close my lips and eyes again!"

"Well, then, I shall do so," he says, taking the gold-embroidered cloth and throwing it over her face. "I do so, Butheita, because I am not willing the rude wind should kiss the cheek of my beloved ; unwilling the stars should gaze down on you in your loveliness, unwilling the moon should adorn your countenance with its lustre. I, alone, will adorn you; I, alone, will gaze on your loveliness; and my sighs, alone, shall kiss your cheeks! Yes, Butheita, you belong to me alone, and shall be my slave, as I am your slave, and yet your master. Shake your head if you will. I am your master, for you love me. You shake your head again? You mean to say you hate me! I don't believe it.—Onward, my dromedary, speed through the desert! Onward, my Alpha!"

The dromedary moves on still more rapidly over the desert; its shadow dances beside them on the sand, and behind them the shadow of the Nubian's steed.

The moon grows pale, the stars vanish; day is beginning to dawn. As the sun rises, they reach their destination.

The dromedary stops at the little gate at the end of the park. Achmed dismounts, and opens the gate. Mohammed has lifted Butheita from the palanquin, and now carries his precious burden into the park.

All are asleep in the palace. The two glide softly through the park to the door of the harem. Achmed unlocks it, and Mohammed ascends the stairway with noiseless footsteps. No one hears or sees him. Achmed hastens back to care for the horse and the dromedary. Mohammed carries the precious burden, that lies quietly in his arms, through the suite of glittering apartments. Butheita sees nothing of the splendor through which they pass, and, if she saw it, would not heed it.

What cares she for gilded rooms? the desert puts on more glorious attire with each day's dawn, and nothing can be more sublime than the sphinx near the great pyramids. He who has seen that is astonished at nothing else; to him all things in the houses of men seem petty.

Mohammed is aware of this, and he understands the heart of the girl he bears in his arms; he now enters the large room at the end of the apartments of the harem. Here he gently lays her down, and locks the door. The sun has risen and gilds with its light the lattice-work of the windows, throwing little crimson circles on the mat that covers the floor. Mohammed unties the silken scarf that binds Butheita's feet, and assists her to stand up.

"Arise, Butheita, for you are about to enter into a new life. Arise!"

He also unties the scarf that binds her hands, and she now stands before him with her face veiled. He gently removes the cuffei from her head. Her large black eyes glance around the wide space, and she sees the tent that looks exactly like her father's. She turns her eyes on Mohammed with a loving glance. He draws her to his heart.

"Are you still resolved, Butheita, that he only shall kiss you who leads you to his tent as his wife. And will you only allow him to kiss you at the door of the tent?"

"I am still so resolved!" she exclaims, but in joyous tones. "I am still so resolved!"

Mohammed lifts her in his arms and carries her to the tent.

"Butheita, this is my tent! I lead you into it as my wife. Butheita, may I now kiss you?"

She makes no answer, but, with a loud cry, throws herself upon his breast, and kisses him passionately. Mohammed encircles Butheita with his arms, and bears her into his tent.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

THE citadel presents a scene of great animation; its apartments, especially those in which the viceroy's sons are to reside, are richly adorned and hung with flowers. All the doors are thrown open, and a number of richly-attired female slaves are standing in the hall at the head of the grand stairway which is covered with costly carpets from Damascus.

The citadel has put on festive attire in honor of the wife and sons of the viceroy Mohammed Ali, who are expected to arrive to-day.

The people are repairing in vast numbers to Boulak on the shore of the Nile, where the viceroy is to receive his family, and it is whispered among them that she who has resided in the palace of the Esbekieh is not his first, but a second wife.

No one has seen her, but very beautiful she must be, else her husband would not guard her so closely. No one has seen her, but a woman certainly dwells there in the harem ; its windows are lighted up at night, and eunuchs stand guard outside ; veiled slaves have also been seen going in and out of the palace. Yes, the harem has an occupant, but it is only the second wife who lives there ; the first is to arrive to-day with her sons from Alexandria !

The people repair in vast numbers to Boulak, to be present at the reunion of the family of their viceroy, who has already made himself beloved by his subjects. He throws money among the poor when he drives through Cairo. He is just, and punishes the guilty with perfect impartiality, the fellah and courtier alike.

Mohammed, accompanied by his officers, has ridden down to Boulak, where two landings have been prepared, and richly adorned with carpets, flowers, and overhanging silken awnings. Here, at the landing where the viceroy and his generals are waiting, will the sons, and at the other, where the women stand, will the wife arrive.

The viceroy, erect in his stirrups, looks down the river, and he is the first to discover the red flags that appear above the horizon. The sight of the father is keener than that of the curious. A smile lights up his countenance, and he turns to Hassan, who stands beside him. "They are coming, Hassan ; my sons are coming !"

"Yes, they are coming ! The princes are coming !" cry the people. The splendid vessel approaches nearer and nearer ; the flags flutter gayly in the sunshine ; and now Mohammed sees the three figures, standing on the deck, waving white handkerchiefs in their outstretched hands. These are his sons. How changed the three boys seem to the father ! These are no longer boys, they are now youths. It is, however, not strange that they have altered in appearance ; great changes take place in five years.

The vessel lands, and his sons spring quickly to the shore. The viceroy, Mohammed Ali, had determined to make the meeting a theatrical spectacle for the people. The people love such spectacles, and they were to be permitted to look into the sanctuary of his domestic life as through a glass door. Such had been his purpose. But at the moment, all this is forgotten, and it is not the viceroy, dismounting in a stately manner from his horse to receive his sons, his first servants ; it is only the father who springs with a single bound from his saddle, encircles his three sons in one embrace, presses them to his heart, and kisses them tenderly.

The people shout with delight, "Long live our viceroy and the princes !" The guns of the citadel thunder forth a greeting, and announce to the people that the viceroy no longer rules alone, but that his sons now rule with him. The welfare of the land is assured, for the existence of the ruling house is assured.

The young princes mount the horses held in readiness for them, and ride into the city beside their father. The thunder of the cannon resounds continuously, shout after shout rends the air, the band of the regiment of soldiers that had been drawn up at the landing to receive the princes, joins in the acclaim with merry strains of music, and the regiment falls into line, and marches behind the viceroy and his suite. Dense masses of people, Turks and Armenians, Copts and Jews, Arabs and fellahs, throng the streets through which they pass. On the imposing procession moves toward the citadel.

At the same time a splendid debahieh has landed at the second place ; it is the wife of Mohammed Ali, who stands on the deck. No soldiers, and in fact no men, await her on the shore. A wide space about the landing is kept free by the eunuchs, who drive the curious back with threatening gestures. Hundreds of women stand on either side of the landing-place in long rows, their heads enveloped in long white veils that fall down over the splendid dresses glittering with silver embroidery.

Mohammed has commanded that all the women of Cairo should go down to Boulak to meet his wife Ada, and obey they must, they well know, for he is certain to punish disobedience to his commands. They were also to tender her presents upon their arrival at the palace.

She stands on the deck, gazing around with indifference at the spectacle before her. She is looking for him only—for her husband. But he is nowhere to be seen. He does not receive her. It would probably not become the great ruler to welcome his wife before the world. No one must perceive that the viceroy is also a husband, a man !

Yes, she has already heard of this : the heart must not be laid bare to the world, for the world ridicules it.

This is why Mohammed is not there. She draws her veil more closely about her, and, conducted by the eunuchs, descends slowly the stairway, strewed with flowers, to the landing-place, where the women press forward to greet her.

"Welcome, Sitta Ada ! Blessed be your coming ! Allah's blessings upon you, Sitta Ada !"

Hundreds of voices repeat the words. She is glad to escape these noisy greetings by entering the gilded coach that now drives up to the landing-place. The equipage moves on slowly, followed by the procession of women who are to accompany her to the citadel.

It is well that the curtains are drawn over the windows of the carriage, and that no one can see the tears that burst from Sitta Ada's eyes, or hear the sighs that escape her breast.

"Oh that I had remained in Cavalla ! This cold splendor alarms me ! Would that Mohammed had received me quietly, pressed me to his heart and said, 'Welcome, Ada—welcome to my heart and home !"

Is she welcome ? He rejoices in his sons, now growing up to manhood. and soon to accompany him to battle and become heroes. In his joy over his sons, he has forgotten the wife who is now approaching the citadel with her brilliant suite. He is first reminded of her presence by the thunder of the guns that announce her arrival at the citadel. The reception must, however, be completed. He has arranged every thing with the master of ceremonies, who is to conduct his queen into the grand audience-chamber to the throne that stands on a scaffold under a purple canopy.

Ada's heart trembles as she approaches it, and her thoughts are with the house in Cavalla. Oh that Mohammed Ali had returned to live with her there ! "Departed are all the sweets of domestic happiness for poor Ada!" a voice whispers in her heart.

The women now come forward, four at a time, and with loud congratulations lay the presents at her feet, the golden dishes, the jewelled buckles, the gold-inworked cloths, and every thing that delights the heart of woman. With kindly words Ada thanks them for their gifts, hardly realizing what they are. She thanks Allah when the affair is concluded, and the master of ceremonies approaches, and with a deferential bearing requests her to descend from the throne, and walk to the door that leads to the inner apartments. It alarms her to walk between the long rows of women who bow low as she passes. But behind the door are the private apartments, and there she will be alone. This thought cheers her as she walks on unconscious that a number of female slaves are following her to the private apartments. Those who fill such exalted stations as that of the wife of the Viceroy of Egypt, know no solitude, not even in their private apartments. The slaves now gather around her, fall on their knees, and swear to serve her faithfully, and her first maid asks if her gracious mistress will now retire to the toilet-chamber to change her dress. She dares not refuse, and allows herself to be conducted thither, where the most splendid garments lie in readiness for her. She makes no selection, but permits her women to dress her as they think proper. This is at last concluded, and one of them now announces that she may enter the private apartments, where his highness the viceroy is to receive her.

Her heart throbs wildly, like the heart of a young girl, as she enters the apartment. At the entrance she stands still, timidly. Alas! he is not yet there—the room is empty. The viceroy makes no haste to greet his wife.

The door now opens, and Mohammed Ali enters.

Ah! she would hardly have recognized him; to her he seems quite changed. His countenance is so radiant, his bearing so proud, so splendid his gold-embroidered uniform, so gracious the smile with which he advances to meet her, so gracious the manner in which he extends his hand and smiles on her.—Ada is conscious that it is the viceroy, the good friend, who stands before her; but the husband it is not.

"Welcome, dear Ada!" he says, in kindly tones. Ah! she is familiar with these loveless tones. "Welcome, dear Ada; I rejoice heartily to see you again after this long separation."

She takes his hand, presses it in her own, and looks at him earnestly.

"Yes, after so long a separation; do you know how long we have been separated? Do you feel it in your heart?"

"I well know how long, Ada. We have been separated five years," he replies, with a kindly smile. "You see five years have effected great changes."

"Yes," murmurs she, releasing his hand. "They have brought about great changes. I see it, Mohammed."

"But, dear Ada, my heart and my affection for you are unchanged," he says, gently. "I shall ever honor you, Ada, as my first wife, as the mother of my first-born sons. Yes, as my first wife."

She bows her head. She understands the tone with which Mohammed had pronounced that fearful word. Yes, she understands it, and bows her head in humility. And what would opposition avail her? The law of the prophet allows the man to have several wives. Love is fleeting, and its ardor soon passes away after marriage. Friendship is the successor of love, and men say this is happiness.

The women sigh, and bow their heads in silence.

What would it avail Ada to rise in arms against Mohammed's words, "*My first wife*"?

"Yes, Ada, you will ever remain my first wife, the honored mother of my sons. You will ever remain my friend."

Yes, that was the word. She closes her eyes and shudders.

"'Tis well. Your friend, Mohammed! I will not, however, honor you as my friend, but as my lord, and as the man I have loved alone and best on earth!"

He gently encircles her neck with his arm, and impresses a kiss on her forehead. Such a kiss as makes the heart of the woman who loves writhe in anguish.

Now he begins to speak to her, in gay tones, of his handsome, manly sons.

"They shall come to greet their mother; they are waiting in the next room."

He walks hastily to the door, opens it, and the three boys enter, each holding a small package wrapped in paper in his hand.

"What do you bring me, boys?" asks Mohammed, seating himself on a divan, and calling them to his side.

"What do we bring you, father?" says the eldest, Ibrahim. "We have brought you keepsakes from Cavalla, and with them we wish to show you that we have learned something, and have endeavored to imitate you. The merchant, Lion, has often told me how daring a boatman you were, and I determined to learn to manage a boat and defy the treacherous waves, also."

The viceroy regards his son with a radiant smile. The boy's sparkling eyes gladden his heart and inspires it with high hopes.

"I rejoice in you, Ibrahim, and expect you to become a hero," cries Mohammed. "Continue. You were resolved to defy the waves—"

"Yes, father, and I did learn to make the waves obey me, and I became the best boatman in Praousta. I also learned to dive, and no diver could surpass me. To prove what I say, I have brought you this keepsake. I brought it up from the depths of the sea; it was tied up in a bag. I dragged it to the shore and opened it. And what do you suppose it contained, father? Only think, a skeleton! As these were the first things I had taken out of the deep as a diver I have brought you something out of the bag as a keepsake. Here it is, I—lay it at your feet."

"From the depths of the sea?" repeated the viceroy, with pallid cheeks. "Tell me, Ibrahim, were you diving off the shore of Praousta?"

"Yes, father. You know the shore is steep, and the sea deep, close in to the beach. There I dived and found the bag, with which I swam to the shore. The bag contained bones, and also that which I have brought you."

"A bag that contained a skeleton?" repeated Mohammed, with quivering lips. "And what is it you have brought me?"

"A tress of hair—a tress of long, black hair. It must have been a woman that was cast into the sea in the bag."

Mohammed does not take the package from his son's hand, and Ibrahim lays it at his feet and looks at him with astonishment. He is completely changed; his cheeks are pallid and his eyes dim. Ada also observes this change with dismay, and calls her sons to her side. Aroused by her voice, Mohammed awakens from his stupor, and waves his hand as if to ward off some spectre.

"And what have you brought me, Ismail?—and you, Toussoun?"

"We have also brought you keepsakes from Cavalla," they reply. "We endeavored to make of ourselves what you were when a boy. We were told that you had been a famous climber, that no rock was too high, and the entrance to no cave too narrow, for you. And we discovered a large cave down by the shore, near Praousta. It was necessary to creep through a long, narrow passage to get into it, and what do you think we found there? It seemed as if people had lived there—there were cushions and all sorts of things scattered around on the floor. Oh, we often enjoyed ourselves in the cave, singing songs, and eating fruit we had taken there with us. However, when we visited the cave for the last time, we determined, each of us, to bring you a keepsake from it, and here are the things we have brought. I bring you a beautiful little cup I found there."

"And I bring you a piece of cloth—a beautiful gold-embroidered cuffei which I found in the cave. It is very handsome, only there are a few spots, as though blood had dropped on it."

And, like Ibrahim, the two boys also lay the packages they had brought at their father's feet. He sits there for a moment as motionless and pale as a marble statue, and then motions with his hand toward the door. He cannot speak, he only motions to them to leave the room, and the boys hasten to their mother's side in alarm. Ada takes them by the hand and leaves the room with them.

Mohammed is now alone with his sons' offerings.

He stares down at them for a while, and then takes up the package Ibrahim had laid at his feet.

He tears it open, and there lies Masa's long, black hair. A cry escapes his lips! It is not the viceroy, not the man, who cries out. It is the death-cry of his first love!

He presses the hair to his lips, and two tears trickle slowly down his cheeks. His gaze fastens on his Masa's hair in a long, painful glance.

He had often kissed these tresses while they clung to her beloved head. He now kisses them for the last time, and then conceals them in his bosom.

He bends down again and takes up the presents of his other sons.

He remembers the cup well. Masa had often drunk out of it.

He kisses the rim of the cup, the place where Masa's crimson lips had touched ; he then carefully places it on the cushion beside him.

He now takes up the third present—the gold-embroidered cuffei he had purchased for Masa from the merchant, Lion.

She wore it around her neck for the last time when he pressed her to his heart and took leave of her for a short time, as he thought. She wore it when he left her that night, and when he returned she was gone, and he did not see her again until her death-hour.

He holds the cloth up before him, and sees the dark-red spots—her blood! She had struggled with her captor, and he had injured her shoulder, where the cloth rested, with the point of his dagger! He can tell this by the incision in the cloth where the spots of blood are.

This is Masa's blood, shed for him ! He kisses the spot, and binds the cloth around his neck—the cloth she has worn, the cloth inscribed with her blood ! A holy remembrance of her, he will never part with it. It shall protect him from the rude wind of the world.

He lays his hand on Masa's tresses again ; he looks at the cup, and sits there motionless, absorbed in thought, for a long time.

His whole past rises up before him. He is once more at home, on the rude rock where he spent his youth.

He sees every thing once more ; sees, also, the pale face of his Osman, of his dear friend.

He is dead—his sons have told him that Osman is dead.

"It is well for him that he is, he suffered much," he murmurs, in low tones. "I, also, have suffered much. And yet I have also experienced much happiness, and shall probably do so in the future, also," he continues, in louder tones. "Sink down behind me, past ! the future is mine. And now be strong, Mohammed ; arise and be a man ! The past is at an end ! Masa, you have to-day sent me a greeting through my sons. Farewell ! Now I belong to the present and to the future. Farewell !"

He rises, walks with firm footstep through the apartment, and enters the room where Ada and his sons are awaiting him.

"Come, my sons, I will show you my capital, the most beautiful of all cities—I will show you Cairo. Come !"

He takes his sons by the hand, and, alas ! he forgets the poor woman who is regarding him tenderly, and down whose cheeks two tears slowly trickle as the door closes behind him.

Mohammed leads his sons through the long suite of splendid apartments, which they regard with wonder, into the grand reception-chamber, and steps out with them upon the balcony. The beautiful city of Cairo now lies spread out before them. Over there glitters the Nile, like a silver ribbon, and beyond tower aloft the wondrous forms of the great Pyramids of Gheezeh.

A cry of delight escapes the lips of the boys. "Oh, how beautiful, how glorious, father !"

"Yes, beautiful is Cairo ; beautiful is Egypt, my sons. All that you see spread out before you is mine. I am the ruler of Egypt ; you shall be its rulers after me, and our house shall become great and glorious. This I swear, by Allah ! I will not, like my predecessors, be deposed from my throne and descend the hill on which stands the proud citadel of Cairo. I swear, by Allah, that my house shall continue to rule over Egypt, and it shall be inscribed in the books of history : 'Mohammed Ali was the first free viceroy of Egypt, and his sons succeeded him on the throne.' Swear to me, my sons, that you will one day become good and just rulers over Egypt!"

"We swear that we will, father! We will one day become good and just rulers over Egypt!" the three boys reply, as with one voice, their eyes sparkling, their countenances radiant with the light of high resolve.

"You have heard it, Allah!" cries the father, in solemn tones, his head bowed down, his right hand uplifted. "I will firmly establish the rule of my house, and my sons have sworn to become good and just rulers. Then be thou, also, our gracious ruler, and with thy great prophet, Mohammed, look down with favor upon the four human beings who stand humbly in thy presence! Not the vassal of the grand-sultan at Stamboul, but the free, independent viceroy, will I be, and after me shall my sons rule—this I swear! Seal thou my resolve with thy blessing, O Allah!"

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